# EAST BAY EXPRESS

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# NEWS OPINION

## Editor's Note

Each year we compile some of the memorable letters, rants, and press releases we received during the prior twelve months. In the interest of verisimilitude, all spelling, punctuation, and grammar are the writers' own.

## This Is My Erotic Story with Weight Loss

My name is karmela,24 years old. Since my childhood I was having extra weight, very extra, I loved eating too much various foods who they make me increased weight day after day, and I can't never stop. Until I got to the age of 18 years, the cursory was very bad and I am ashamed of appearing in front of people, it feels really devastated. I can't wear clothes that I love plus I can't find it for me. On the other hand I suffered from cholesterol and hypertension Non-chronic. Because isolated from the people, no friends no intimate relationships because people's comments about cursory already I'm ashamed of myself, was my life as hell. So I decided to change my life, make it better. I don't want to live like this, I want a Beautiful cursory. I want to wear narrow pants and beautiful dresses, I want to have my intimate relationships as all people simply decided to restore my life.

Tired at the beginning, I read a lot about ways to lose weight, foods to eat and stay away from others or minimize, and appropriate sports which help to burn fat better and fast. Hard to get a good result in a short time, it needs patience, strong will, persistence and not despair. But I knew I can do that I will succeed. I learned not to believe false ads, they say to lose weight in one week that I bought this product for sale sports machine or Weight loss products. Because when you buy and short time passes without any apparent change, you get frustrated and be disappointed. And feel it's nothing that can help you or solve your problem. So do what you see fit not to believe false ads, armed with patience and determination, working on loses your weight from all sides, Low-fat foods and calories, global food systems, practice of different sports, Regular walking, With determination and continue you get good results and you can do it. This is what happened with me, after that I got the best way to lose weight, I continue them and did not never feel despair. I was thinking always in the objective, in my beautiful configurable and to live a happy life. I noticed that the good results began to appear on my body. Fat loss every day. In my body appears and takes his natural form after that was distorted and Fat stacked everywhere. I got a body always dreamed. People praise my cursory and my figure, Asked how I can make this change. That wasn't a surprise for me it took time and effect but if the result was satisfactory, the time and effort and all difficulties are not worth anything to result.

In this period some people tried to embrace me, people who have the same problem. Excess weight. They asked me about the program that I followed, and they advised me to share my experience with others for they will benefit greatly.

That's what prompted me to write this primary article to tell the people who suffering from excess weight about my experience. There will be other articles tell you about what you must do to get the body you want.

*karmela*

## I'm Not so Sure

"The truth, madame," said he - "in the name of Heaven, the truth! Do not flatter a dying man with a hope that may prove vain. There he stopped, a look from Colbert telling him he was on the wrong track.

*Anna Green*

## The Gift that Keeps on Giving!!!

This Holiday Season avoid those embarrassing bathroom odors with Poo-Pourri's before-you-go bathroom sprays and candles!!

Give a gift that will keep on giving well after the new year has rung with Poo-Pourri.

Poo Pourri wishes one and all a merry holiday season that's free of the odors a house full of good food and people can bring. But, if well wishes won't be enough to hide Uncle Jim's bathroom presence, then stock up on Poo-Pourri's before-you-go bathroom sprays and new candles. Made from natural essential oils, they safely contain and destroy unwanted odors so no one has to know what goes on behind closed doors.

Entertain with the holiday spirit by setting out a chic bottle of their Santa Poo bathroom spray in guest restrooms. A spritz or two of this blend of fruity citrus and fresh Holly and Evergreen effectively neutralizes any potential embarrassments and sets everyone in the right mood to enjoy a carol or two. Living a life odor-free is as easy as spraying the toilet bowl water before use and then flushing away. Stuff conveniently sized pocket sprays into stockings, or use their silly toilet paper gift sets as a gag present that friends and family never knew they needed.

Hosts and hostesses aren't the only ones that love the original Poo-Pourri blend of Bergamot, Lemongrass and Grapefruit aromas—Santa does too! After a night full of milk and cookies that bearded fellow certainly has to contend with a tummy that's all a rumble. This holiday season keep the bathroom stocked with Poo-Pourri Original, so that jolly fat man, or any guests that come to town, can take care of business free of care.

Now any space in the house can smell delightfully festive, thanks to Poo-Pourri's new soy candles. Prepared with the same odor neutralizing essential oils and enzymes as their bathroom sprays, these candles are just the thing to add some panache and sweet scents to any space. Composed of 100% soy wax and cotton wicks, they are safe for the environment and their users.

Founder and aromatherapy specialist Suzy Batiz launched the Poo Pourri brand in 2007 and has since transformed the $25K start up into a $4M enterprise boasting over 60 different products being sold in five countries.

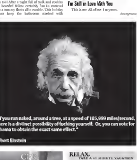
For samples or additional information, please visit www.poopourri.com or contact press@chicblvd.com.

*Noel Thomas, ChicExecs PR*

## I'm Still in Love With You

This is me. All of me. I'm yours.

*Anonymous*



"If you run naked, around a tree, at a speed of 185,999 miles/second, there is a distinct possibility of fucking yourself. Or, you can vote for Obama to obtain the exact same effect."

Albert Einstein

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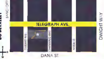
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*Anonymous*

## Who Told China?

For over 20 years an organization in ohio has been researching and using an imaging and tracking radar system that can send and detect sound and other frequencies. the operators of this system can talk to someone without other people hearing and they can hear my response. it can tell each person apart and remembers them. it was being used before haarp or gwen were finished. This technology has been kept secret from the public. only a small group of people including police and doctors knew about it. it has grown as of 2012 nearly all police, firefighters and medical professionals in columbus ohio are aware of it. a network of professionals, business owners and most cops in the rest of the state along with atleast part indiana are also aware. some doctors and nurses are in fear for their own safety and that of their families while the police and mental health professionals seem to have been advanced in their position because of their willingness to work with this organization. please read dtty info. china was one of the first three visits to this site. on the first day someone in china typed dtty info into their computer. who told china? in the first 7 days there were visits from from 10 countries. all typed in. after 35 days 35 countries. most of these non english speaking countries. all concerned about whats happening in columbus ohio.

china – israel – luxembourg – republic of korea – germany – russian federation – austria – romania – ukraine – georgia – japan – united arab emirates – slovenia – slovakia – ethiopia – el salvador – portugal – sweden – phillipines – new zealand – latvia – switzerland – france – netherlands – australia – india – hong kong – united states – equador – canada – united kingdom – panama – jamaica – malaysia

*Anonymous*

## (1%?) Rich? Brats

apparently it isn't enough to live in a high rise apartment building in downtown berkeley ... and presumably attend the university of california? ... no ... some (1%?) rich? brats have been deliberately throwing objects off of the tower building at 2004 university ( southeast of milvia ) ... and apparently the building owners? managers? "berkeley apartments" at 1916 oxford ( northwest of berkeley way ... 510 843 2000 ) are unable or unwilling to do anything about it ... adjacent neighbor on corner restaurant cafe has suffered broken skylight windows cause of the bored? (1%?) rich? brats ... n business across the street "unique images home interiors" ( 2001 university ... northeast corner at milvia ) almost incurred a broken plate glass window when a heavy metal fire extinguisher was thrown off the building and across the street ... a young asian couple crossing the street almost got hit by

an egg ... which splattered on the street ... how many more times will this happen? ...

*Anonymous*

## Must B Religion

If ... cant make a living sale for a senior & nonmember peacefully cornet regardless of how hard he works or ... & then it must b religion

*Anonymous*

## HELLO

How are you doing and how is your day going? I am Kay Dami. Am looking for a trustworthy man who believes in true love,I am single never been married before,I am looking for a mature man who can understand life with me. I am 28Years old,5.6ft tall and 56kg,Blond hair Blue eye and milky white skin and big natural breasts I don't smoke and I don't drink alcoholic,I don't have kids. I am a happy single lady looking for a wonderful man out there. I am looking to relocate someday .I really need someone to make me believe in the right way of life. I am an accountant i do lots of coordinating job with a charity firm down here. I love doing my best. I am looking forward to meet someone with a heart of gold.I am the open hearted girl who likes to take everything that life can offer but to give in return as well! I am active and enthusiastic. I am cheerful and I treat people just I want them to treat me. I am attentive and caring, I need to love and to be loved. to bring my future!

man happiness and joy. I am the open-hearted girl who likes to take everything that life can offer but to give in return as well! I am active and enthusiastic, I am cheerful and I treat people just I want them to treat me. I am attentive and caring, I need to love and to be loved. to bring my future man happiness and joy. I don't like to sit on one place and I am dreaming of strong and friendly family.I love nature very much and I think that to live surrounded by nature is something wonderful. I enjoy music and dancing. I love to take photos of myself which I collect. let me stop right here.

*KAY DAMI*

## I'm Tired of Waiting for Your Answer

Hi, my prince.. Yes you understand correctly you are the one I'm looking for the prince. Write me and I will answer you. I kiss you and wait for an answer. Your Princess.

*Anonymous*

## A Better Understanding About Twin Souls

My name. Joe. I am writing this because. I would like to inform and give people a better understanding about twin souls. It is something that people think is make believe and doesn't exist. It is not something that is just in the movies. Around four years ago I met mine. It was a secret that I held for that amount of time. I just knew it was going to be something she couldn't comprehend. Most people will tell you that they have an opened mind. I find that the idea of an opened mind is something like being accepting of other cultures,different backgrounds,sexual orientations etc. I find it funny that someone can pray to their god,have faith and know his love is unconditional and exist. Without ever seeing him. Yet those same people will not believe you when you tell them you have found your twin soul and that the same love that they supposedly feel from their god is meant to be felt here on earth. God forbid that is to much to fathom. I don't know I think someone is lying. My life has been completely fliped upside down because of this. If you know someone and they say that they have met their twin soul/soulmate and their world didn't get fliped upside down please know that they are just talking out of their ass. There is a difference between clicking with someone and actually meeting that person. I have been trying to explain everything to my twin for the past five months. Keep in mind that we have only spoken a total of five times in four years and I have never dated her. Yet I know she snores,doesn't like kids,has deep emotional issues, I can feel every last bit of her emotions. I know where she is at without asking questions. I could tell her if her arm is acting up. I have also told her about a business she was getting ready to open when it was still in the planning stages. I could even tell her that she will have three kids one girl and two boys. I have told her about new cars that she has had and I have never seen her in. The messed up part about this is that I also know when she is going to pass away. November 12,2035 at 9:00pm in a car crash. It is hard to get the image of her dead in that car. I have told her that I want to grow old and gray with her but it turns out she will not have a single gray hair when she goes. Everything comes to me through dreams or thought. Thoughts that I know are not mine. Finding your twin opens up a whole new world to you. You become smarter,sharper your view of the world changes. You also see your path and reason for being all to clear. And I must mention. That when your mind is so opened an man is it allows the spirit world to fuck with you. Believe me when I tell you these things you see in your dreams will make a grown man shit his pants and beg for a priest. You know I told my twin that the first time I seen her was when I was thirteen in walnut creek. It turns out I was wrong on that. I did see her at thirteen but it was because I had her face tattoed on my right arm at thirteen. Twenty years prior to meeting her in person. She was only eight years old when I got it. I could never give someone an answer when they asked who that was. I truly didn't know all I would tell them is that it was free. Well now there is a name and a story for the face that I had tattooed on me for more than half my life. Keep in mind that I never lie not even if my life depended on it. I would rather live my life on this earth with the honor of telling the truth then live a lie and die a liar. There are words that I live by "stop the lies live your truth" not just the lies that we tell other people but the lies we tell ourselves just to get through our day. Would it be possible to write a story on this in the east bay express. Just a thought. I really feel that people should know about this and that it is far from a joke. Don't I wish. I have mentioned to my twin that we will be together within the next six months and I am right on that just as I was right on everything else. I really wish we had a choice on this but that is not the case. Twin Souls get together to help humanity in some way and to be honest that is the most exciting part. Thank you and take care

*Joe*

## A FAILED MARRIAGE PROPOSAL SENDS A MAN OFF THE DEEP END, WHERE HE FORMS AN UNLIKELY BOND WITH A LOBSTER

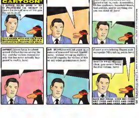
We all know that men and women deal with the loss of love totally differently. But turning to a lobster for comfort and bonding? I bet that's one you've never heard before. A dog, a cat – yes – but a lobster?

Introducing Dax Santi – a local San Francisco artist and writer who took his break up and created a story about bonding and friendship with a crustacean. Think "The Little Mermaid" for adults. A love story (written by a man) without the fluff, Pinching Lobsters is a more humorous and sarcastic take on how a broken heart can lead to making poor decisions.

*Mandi Sue*

## THIS MODERN WORLD

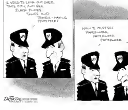
by TOM TOMORROW


FILL-IN-THE-BLANK GENERIC GUN MASSACRE CARTOON*
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE GOING TO TRY TO POLITICIZE THE INCIDENT IN [insert location of most recent gun massacre here]
YOU MEAN THE "INCIDENT" WHERE [insert less superficially horrific details of latest massacre here]
YOU KNOW PERFECTLY WELL THAT THE [choose one] KILLERS COULD JUST AS EASILY HAVE USED [insert list of random, potentially lethal objects, including but not limited to knives, rocks, automobiles, kitchen appliances, household bleach, bad seafood, and/or anything else you can think of here]
ANYWAY [insert fantasies about armed civilian heroes saving the day, and the various reasons for why this has never actually happened in reality, here]
AND BESIDES [insert ... of truncated Second Amendment, without revealing slightest trace of empathy for victims of this or any other gun massacre here]
[insert overwhelming disgust with sociopathic NRA talking points here]
SAVE AND REUSE, OVER AND OVER AND OVER AND OVER AND OVER AND OVER

# MORE OF THE SAME FROM OPD?

The new settlement agreement between civil rights attorneys and the City of Oakland may not reform the city's troubled police department.

By Robert Gammon and Ali Winston


I USED TO LOOK OUT OVER THIS CITY AND SEE BLACK DUDES THUGS AND TROUBLE-MAKING PROTESTERS
OPD
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NOW I JUST SEE PAPERWORK, PAPERWORK PAPERWORK.
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The Oakland Police Department narrowly avoided federal receivership last week when US District Judge **Thelton Henderson** approved a new settlement agreement between civil rights attorneys and the City of Oakland. Under the agreement, the city must hire a "compliance director" who will oversee the department's federally mandated reform efforts. City officials and civil rights attorneys **John Burris** and **Jim Chanin** have expressed confidence that the compliance director will enable OPD to finally live up to the federal consent decree that stemmed from the infamous Riders scandal a decade ago. But there are questions as to whether the settlement goes far enough and whether the compliance director will be able to change OPD's dysfunctional culture — a culture that has stymied the reforms so far.

Since the city agreed to the consent decree in 2003, Oakland has had four police chiefs who have often treated the reforms as roadblocks to policing. They've complained that the requirements have forced them to assign too many cops to internal affairs and made officers fill out too much paperwork. They've argued that they can't solve crimes and lower the city's crime rate because they spend too much time trying to comply with the decree.

And their distaste for the reforms has permeated throughout the command staff and the department. Rank-and-file cops also dislike and resist the mandates. So it's not surprising that the reforms are not being implemented and that citizen complaints against OPD for misconduct are higher than ever.

Oakland street cops also appear to be avoiding some police work because they don't want to comply with the reforms. Last week, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that vehicle and pedestrian stops by Oakland cops plummeted by 75 percent from 2008 to the present — from more than 68,000 stops to a projected 15,733 for 2012. The article attributed the drop in stops to the department's loss of two hundred officers since the end of 2008 and to the unwillingness of street cops to fill out paperwork required by the consent decree.

Citing officers who spoke anonymously, the article claimed that stops are "distinctly complicated in Oakland" because officers are now required to fill out separate reports on each person they stop, including the person's race and gender, as well as the justification for and outcome of the stop. "The policies become so restrictive that police work isn't possible," said one unnamed officer.

However, the so-called "stop data" requirements in the consent decree have not blocked other police departments from doing their police work. Indeed, stop data requirements represent best practices for 21st-century American policing, and have been adopted by several other departments that have undergone their own reforms under consent decrees. "All the consent decrees are essentially the same," said **Samuel Walker**, professor emeritus of criminal justice at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. "There is nothing unique, or uniquely difficult, about the Oakland NSA [Negotiated Settlement Agreement]."

A 2009 report from researchers at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government noted the progress that the Los Angeles Police Department has made under its consent decree and the positive impact the reforms had on street policing. Even though LA street cops viewed the stop data requirements as a burden to their work as well, LAPD's patrol division improved the quality of its stops, resulting in more cases that actually made their way to court. "Despite the views of some officers that the consent decree inhibits them, there is no objective sign of so-called 'de-policing' since 2002. Indeed, we found that both the quantity and quality of enforcement activity have risen substantially over that period," the researchers wrote. "The greater quantity is evident in the doubling of both pedestrian stops and motor vehicle stops since 2002, and in the rise in arrests over that same period. The greater quality of stops is evident in the higher proportion resulting in an arrest and the quality of arrests is evident in the higher proportion in which the District Attorney files felony charges."

Cities similar in size to Oakland, such as Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, also have reformed their police departments to meet modern law enforcement standards in recent years. By contrast, OPD's arrests and solve rates for violent crimes have plummeted in the past half decade as its reform efforts went nowhere (see "Getting Away with Murder," 11/14).

It should be noted that Oakland also has suffered from a lack of political leadership over the past decade. Mayor **Jerry Brown** instituted the "get tough-on-crime" mindset that led to The Riders scandal and then ignored the federal reforms until late in his tenure when it became clear that he was going to run for attorney general. Mayor **Ron Dellums** was not much better. And Mayor **Jean Quan** has failed to make much progress during her two years in office.

Nonetheless, the decline in stops made by Oakland police provides definitive evidence that the department needs to change its attitude toward the reforms. In September, the *Express* detailed the substantial progress that Detroit had made on its two federal consent decrees in recent years after that city's police department command staff decided to fully embrace best practices in policing (see "The People's Police Department," 9/19).

Detroit cops are now much less likely to stop people because of the color of their skin and they're much less likely to point their guns at minority suspects and witnesses, or to abuse minority suspects and kill them. And over the past two years, complaints of police misconduct in Detroit have plummeted by 41 percent.

By contrast, OPD has made little to no progress under Chief **Howard Jordan** — not unlike what happened under his predecessors **Anthony Batts**, **Wayne Tucker**, and **Richard Word**. And that fact, along with the rank and file's strong resistance to the reforms, is why the new settlement appears to be flawed.

The biggest problem in the new agreement is that the compliance director will only have limited authority. The compliance director, for example, would not have the discretion to replace Jordan if he or she wanted to. The compliance director would have the ability to recommend to Judge Henderson that the police chief be removed, but would have no power to select his replacement. Instead, the authority to hire a new police chief would remain solely with Quan and City Administrator **Deanna Santana**, who have yet to fully — and publicly — embrace best practices in policing either.

In other words, the new settlement agreement does not appear to have gone far enough. And so, one year from now, we may be no closer to having an effective police department than we do today. ●

Seven Days is culled from our news blog, 92510.

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LEGALIZATION NATION

# THE NEW KING OF HUMBOLDT

Visiting the Emerald Triangle is like a trip to Tolkien's Middle Earth. But will Monsanto torch the shire?

By David Downs

Tolkien fans who can't afford to visit Middle Earth in New Zealand should mark their calendars. In December 2013, The Emerald Cup in Humboldt County will offer an enchanting, primeval forest adventure with no small number of stout, hairy gentlemen jovially puffing away on sweet herb.

At this year's cup, held last Saturday at the Mateel Community Center in Redway, several hundred of the world's best pot growers, activists, lawyers, merchandisers, and weed aficionados gathered for the ninth annual event. Billed as "the world's only outdoor organic cannabis cup" and sponsored by *Skunk* magazine, the two-hundred-strain pot contest was the biggest annual gathering of growers from the Emerald Triangle, which is considered to be the largest and best pot-growing region in the world.

Dave Downs
A cup entrant.

The daylong event went down in a huge, wooden community center amid towering redwoods and was marked by copious amounts of rain, fog, and mud — with some snow mixed in. All in all, the event felt like a weedy county fair from *The Hobbit*.

First there's the drive: It's two hundred miles north of the Bay Area up Highway 101 to where it eventually narrows to two lanes and weaves between the tall trees. Last weekend, it was a perilous trip — rainy, foggy, snowy, and spooky. A couple miles off 101, the hamlet of Redway looked like an exterior shot from the movie *Twilight*. Evergreens surround the tiny village. Everything was soaking wet and freezing cold.

Up on a hill above the main road, the Mateel Community Center stood out like an old school mead hall out of *Beowulf*. The wooden, circular building had 25-foot tall ceilings, hardwood floors, and a fire roaring in its stone hearth. Beginning at noon, the place filled up with folks from all walks of life, although there was a distinct demographic bend toward stout, hairy gents layered in dense, dark clothing. Every kind of beard, mustache, and dreadlock combination was on display. The crowd was all smiles as longtime friends caught up with each other and showed off their kids.

Down a soggy hill, in a huge tent, the adult smoking party raged. Stoner dudes and ladies hit joints, bongs, pipes, and vapor pens all day long while chatting and nodding their heads to the live MCs or ogling a display case of the year's entrants.

The Emerald Cup was co-founded in 2003 by weed activist Tim Blake as a very, low-key affair with just 23 entries. By 2010, it was up to 150 entries. This year's two hundred entrants signified the growing comfort of the scene, and the cup's first appearance in Humboldt County. (Typically, it's been held in neighboring Mendocino County.)

After smoking two hundred strains in fourteen days, judges gave the grand prize to local breeding company Cannabis Aficionado for its Chemdawg Special Reserve. The company won a trip to Jamaica and the notoriety of having the best "beans" in the biz.

Judges said The Emerald Cup of 2012 was really the first upbeat one in the last three years. The year 2010 saw the defeat of Prop 19, which a lot of locals wanted to pass, even though they considered it flawed. Then 2011 yielded a terrible, soggy growing season, and the beginning of the federal government's crackdown on medical marijuana businesses.

Conversely, 2012 was a gorgeous year for growing outdoors, and Colorado and Washington legalized pot. Many in the Triangle hope those two states will take some heat off Humboldt County, even as they fear that California legalization in 2013, 2014, or 2016 could destroy their livelihoods.

Colorado has banned outdoor growing and Washington does not allow home growing at all. A big chunk of the Triangle economy is based on indoor or outdoor home growing. The Humboldt weed scene was also founded in the Seventies by hippies and back-to-the-landers who hated government and crony capitalism, and still do.

"We're threatened!" said Robert Sutherland, a "reverend activist" who opened the proceedings Saturday. "Greed owns this country and it is out to crush our way of life, out to push our growers down to a social novelty, like moonshiners.

"Hear me! We work together from the heart, or it's over," he continued. "Let's have an industry for the many, not the few."

Sutherland also pushed for local standards for organic outdoor weed that "can stand as a seal of excellence and preserve our way of life."

Lawyer Edie Lerman fears that Monsanto or private equity firms will raid the weed industry and called for new county laws to keep pot organic and boutique. "I think that it needs to happen on a grassroots level," she said. "Make sure in your county — [a corporate takeover of pot] can't happen."

Others, meanwhile, advocated that the California marijuana industry should strike now while the legalization movement is hot. "Attack! Attack! Attack!" advised San Francisco lawyer Matt Kumin. "This is big. This is the moment. We can drive a stake through the heart of prohibition in the next few months. ... The federal government is vulnerable. We're going to make them cry uncle."

"Cannabis regulation is going to happen. It can happen to us or it can happen for us," added Dan Rush, a union organizer. "We got to be prepared — pragmatic and unified in our approach. If we do ... regulation will happen for us."

But many eventgoers on Saturday were content to simply stay warm, compare weed, and catch up. And plenty remained skeptical about their fortunes — at least in the short-term. "A whole lot more of us are going to go back to jail," said one Northern California grower. "That's what's going to happen." ●

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This column is culled from our blog of the same name.

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# THE WINNERS AND LOSERS OF 2012

This year's winners included positive campaigning, the environment, and taxing the rich. Among the losers were consumer awareness, medical cannabis, and children's health.

By Robert Gammon

**Winner:** Good government. The results of the 2012 election could potentially usher in an era of good government in Oakland — or at least one that is not so dysfunctional. Councilwoman Rebecca Kaplan and City Attorney Barbara Parker — who handily defeated Councilmembers Ignacio De La Fuente and Jane Brunner, respectively — have both earned reputations for being consensus builders and problem solvers. The additions of three new councilmembers, especially Dan Kalb from North Oakland and Lynette Gibson-McElhaney from West Oakland-Downtown, also should help breathe new life into the council, which in recent years has been ineffective because of petty squabbling.

Rebecca Kaplan

**Loser:** Dysfunctional government. De La Fuente was a primary source of divisiveness in City Hall in recent years and often appeared to be far more happy creating controversy and exacting revenge on political enemies than getting things done. As for Brunner, she seemed obsessed with the politics of running for city attorney (a job for which she lacked the proper qualifications) rather than governing and leading as a councilmember.

**Winner:** Positive campaigning. The victories by Kaplan and Parker also were convincing — and refreshing — wins for positive campaigning. Both candidates' campaigns almost exclusively relied on advertising that informed voters who they were and what they would do in office. And neither went negative until the final days of the campaign — after they had been maliciously attacked by their opponents. Parker, in particular, ran an extremely impressive campaign, ultimately defeating Brunner by nearly 40 percentage points. Don't be surprised if her campaign manager, Doug Linney, becomes one of the most sought-after political consultants in the years to come.

Barbara Parker

**Loser:** Negative and unethical campaigning. Both De La Fuente and Brunner ran relentlessly negative campaigns, and they were trounced at the polls. Same goes for the Oakland police union, which leveled nasty and misleading attacks against Kaplan and Parker as well. The Oakland Zoo also lost its bid for a countywide parcel tax after the organization violated numerous local and state election laws.

**Winner:** Tony Smith. Oakland's superintendent of public schools wasn't on the ballot, but his education reform efforts and policies were — at least indirectly. And they proved to be popular. The four school board candidates who won — incumbents Jody London and Jumoke Hinton Hodge and newcomers Rosie Torres and James Harris — all were supporters of Smith and his plans for the school district. And all four of the losing candidates opposed Smith's proposals to varying degrees.

**Loser:** The Oakland teachers union. The union, which has been unhappy with Smith, backed all four of the losing candidates — incumbent Alice Spearman and newcomers Thearse Pecot, Mike Hutchinson, and Richard Fuentes.

**Winner:** The environment. In Berkeley, four incumbents — Mayor Tom Bates and Councilmembers Laurie Capitelli, Darryl Moore, and Susan Wengraf, who all strongly support smart growth and believe Berkeley needs to add residents in order to discourage suburban sprawl and limit greenhouse gases — all won reelection. Then after the election, US Secretary Ken Salazar decided to close a controversial oyster farm in Point Reyes National Seashore in order to create the first marine wilderness on the West Coast. Plus, California regulators launched the state's cap-and-trade system, which is designed to cap greenhouse-gas emissions and spur green-energy technology.

Tom Bates

**Loser:** The environment. Unfortunately, Measure B1, an Alameda County tax measure that would have raised billions of dollars for mass transit, bike and pedestrian pathways, and transit-oriented development, lost by an extremely narrow margin: just 0.14 percent, or 721 votes. In addition, Measure T, which would have spurred housing development and urban density in West Berkeley, lost in a close race by 1 percentage point, or 512 votes.

**Winner:** Taxing the rich and unions. California voters made it clear that they believe the state's wealthy residents are not paying their fair share of taxes, approving Proposition 30, the so-called Millionaire's Tax, 55 percent to 45 percent. State voters also proved that they have no intention of jumping on the anti-union bandwagon that has swept part of the nation. Proposition 32, which would have devastated the political power of unions in California, lost 47 percent to 53 percent.

**Loser:** The Koch Brothers and Big Business. A shadowy group from Arizona that reportedly has ties to the Koch Brothers funneled $11 million into a campaign that sought to defeat Prop 30 and pass Prop 32, and lost both efforts. Large corporations also helped bankroll the same losing campaigns. And of course, the Koch Brothers' costly attempts to oust President Obama failed badly as well.

**Winner:** Monsanto, Big Business, particularly Monsanto, took solace in the fact that Proposition 37 went down in defeat in California. Prop 37 would have required food companies to inform consumers about whether their products contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and Monsanto spent millions defeating it. Some large food companies that make organic products joined Monsanto's campaign, knowing that even though the labeling initiative likely would have boosted organic food sales, it also threatened to impact their non-organic food revenues.

**Loser:** Consumer awareness. Regardless of whether you were convinced that GMOs pose threats to the environment and human health, Prop 37 would have been a groundbreaking win for consumer transparency and the right to know what's in our food. But Monsanto et al successfully frightened voters into believing that the labeling initiative would have increased food prices — despite no proof that it would have done so in a substantial way.

**Winner:** Marijuana legalization. The decision by voters in Colorado and Washington to legalize pot for recreational use appears to have sparked a historic shift in people's attitudes nationwide. After the landmark election outcomes in those two states, a series of polls showed that a majority of Americans now support legalizing cannabis, and even larger majorities think the federal government should leave the issue up to the states.

**Loser:** Medical marijuana in California. Yet even with the changing voter attitudes and the results in Colorado and Washington, it remains unclear as to whether the federal government will end its fourteen-month-long crackdown on medical pot in the Golden State. As for as 2012 goes, it was a miserable year for dispensaries, growers, and patients, especially in Oakland and Berkeley. The feds shut down industry stalwarts such as Oaksterdam University and Coffeeshop Blue Sky in downtown Oakland, and drove their owner and founder, Richard Lee, out of business. US Attorney Melinda Haag also forced the respected Berkeley Patients Group dispensary to close, and she's working overtime to shutter Harborside Health Center in Oakland, the largest medical cannabis club on the West Coast.

**Winner:** Gay marriage. Attitudes about same-sex marriage are evolving throughout the country as well, as evidenced by the fact that three states — Maine, Maryland, and Washington — legalized gay nuptials on Election Day. In addition, Minnesota voters rejected a Proposition 8-like measure that would have amended the state's constitution to ban gay weddings. And in California, the federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a federal judge's ruling that overturned Prop 8. The issue is now before the US Supreme Court, alongside a challenge to the federal anti-gay marriage law known as the Defense of Marriage Act.

**Loser:** Homophobia. Bigotry against gays and lesbians remains strong nationwide, but it's not nearly as bad as it was just a few years ago. A nationwide survey released earlier this month from Quinnipiac University, a respected pollster, showed that 48 percent of Americans now support gay marriage compared to 46 percent who oppose it. In 2008, the same polling outfit reported that only 36 percent of Americans backed same-sex marriage compared to 55 percent who opposed it. That's a seventeen-point swing in just four years.

**Winner:** Chevron. The oil giant spent at least $1.2 million in Richmond trying to elect three city council candidates and defeat candidates backed by the *Richmond Progressive Alliance* (RPA) — and it worked. Two of the Chevron candidates, Councilman Nat Bates and former Councilman Gary Bell, were victorious. And having a friendly council in Richmond could prove to be pivotal for Chevron as it continues to struggle with the fallout from its massive refinery explosion and fire in August.

**Loser:** Richmond progressives. No RPA candidate won election in Richmond in November — the first time in several years that the group has been shut out in city elections after posting a series of impressive victories. The RPA also lost a seat on the council, and now only has two members on the seven-person panel, although Councilmen Tom Butt and Jim Rogers often vote with the RPA on major issues.

**Winner:** The soda industry. The American Beverage Association spent a whopping $2.7 million in Richmond defeating Measure N, a local ballot initiative that would have taxed sugary drinks. As such, the beverage association made 2012 the most costly election in Richmond history, and the amount of money it spent easily dwarfed the total campaign spending in every other East Bay city this year. The beverage association also spent more money defeating Measure N than the initiative would have raised in tax revenue.

**Loser:** Childhood health. The funds generated by Measure N were to be spent on anti-obesity and children's health programs in Richmond. But the beverage industry successfully scared city voters into believing that the measure was going to do more harm than good for low-income residents, despite the fact that health programs were designed to help those residents the most.

**Winner:** Jerry Brown. Brown's pet ballot measure, Prop 30, won easily, as we noted above, enabling the governor to emerge as a sort of savior of public education in California. If Prop 30 had lost, education funding would have been slashed dramatically — by several billion dollars. The measure, along with an improving economy, also should allow Brown's administration to avoid further deep cuts in 2013.

Jerry Brown

**Loser:** Cities and redevelopment. Although the passage of Prop 30 should provide a lot of financial relief for California cities, Brown's decision to kill redevelopment was a major blow for cities like Oakland. Throughout the past several decades, Oakland and other cities have used redevelopment funds to revitalize blighted areas and build affordable housing. But now it's unclear what cities will do to make up for the lost money that Brown took for the state budget.

**Winner:** Democrats. Not only did Obama win handily, but Democrats also captured super-majorities in both houses of the state legislature. The only question now is whether Dems will use their newfound powers to enact a liberal agenda and reform Prop 13, or will they remain fearful of conservatives and push for more budget cuts and other austerity measures?

**Loser:** Republicans. The GOP proved decisively this year that it's just too conservative for California, especially when it comes to issues like taxing the rich, abortion, equal rights, and gun control. And the question is: Will the California Republican Party turn toward the center and successfully break from the even more conservative national party, or will it remain beholden to the Religious Right, the Tea Party, and the Koch Brothers? ●

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YEAR IN REVIEW

# RENT PRICES SOAR IN OAKLAND

The cause: the relocation of San Francisco residents, who are increasingly priced out the market. The effect: increased revenue for Oakland and a rise in tenant complaints.

By Kathleen Richards

Back in the beginning of the summer, Greg Traverso started casually looking for apartments in Oakland. At the time, Traverso, who currently lives outside of Sacramento (and, full disclosure, used to work for the *Express*), said apartment prices on Craigslist were reasonable: a one-bedroom in the Lake Merritt area, say, for $900 to $1,000. But in the last several months, he's seen prices jump. "Now I'm seeing studios for between $1,100 and $1,200," he said. "I've seen one-bedrooms for $1,300 in the Lake Merritt area."

The increase in price was even more dramatic compared to when Traverso used to live in Oakland, in 2010. Back then, Traverso said he rented a "large" studio with a balcony, parking, and spacious closets near Piedmont Avenue for $850. He recently ran into his old landlord, who said he was now renting his unit for $1,150. That's a 35 percent increase in two years.

As a result, Traverso said he's now considering moving to downtown Sacramento, where he can rent a one-bedroom apartment for $700 or $800 a month. His friends in the Bay Area, he said, are facing similar dilemmas. One friend who lives near Lake Merritt and currently pays $1,100 a month said she wants to move but is afraid to because apartments in her building now rent for $1,500. "It's basically the people coming from San Francisco for cheaper rent are driving up the rent for the people in Oakland," Traverso surmised.

Talk to anyone who's renting or looking to rent in Oakland, and you'll hear similar stories. While rent prices in the city are still relatively affordable compared to San Francisco, certain in-demand Oakland neighborhoods like Uptown, downtown, and Lake Merritt are seeing prices that rival those in San Francisco. A recent search on Craigslist revealed just how high prices have climbed (and how much readers, apparently, are willing to shell out): a two-bedroom apartment near Lake Merritt going for $2,995; a one-bedroom in Adams Point for $1,595; a one-bedroom in Jack London for $1,822; a two-bedroom in downtown Oakland for $2,330.

The reason, as Traverso guessed, appears to be spillover from San Francisco, where rental prices are even higher and competition for housing is fierce. Oakland continues to be a more affordable option than San Francisco, and Oakland's increasing cachet as an arts, music, dining, and nightlife destination is also likely drawing residents. Rent prices in Oakland went up 11.2 percent in fiscal year 2011-12 compared to the year prior, according to a July article in the *San Francisco Business Times*. That helped make Oakland and San Francisco the two US cities that saw the biggest jumps in rent. The average asking rent for Oakland apartments in buildings with at least fifty units was $1,925 in the third quarter, reflecting a 19 percent rise from the same period the prior year, according to an October article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* citing statistics from the apartment data collection company RealFacts. One-bedroom apartments were $1,761, a 20 percent rise from 2011.

Landlords aren't the only ones reaping the benefits, as, too, is the city. Revenue from the business license tax (which landlords are required to pay) was $7.68 million higher in the 2011-12 fiscal year than the year prior, according to Brad Johnson, a financial analyst for the city. He stated that the increase in rent prices played a substantial role in the rise in city revenue. "It's definitely a driver," he said.

But along with higher rental prices has come a surge in complaints to Oakland's Rent Adjustment Program, which acts as a resource for landlords and tenants, and is in charge of enforcing the city's rent control ordinance. According to Program Manager Connie Taylor, the department has seen a 71 percent increase in petition filing in the 2011-12 fiscal year compared to the fiscal year prior, or 389 petitions compared to 228. And this fiscal year, Taylor said they're on track to eclipse last year's number. The majority of the complaints came from tenants regarding unjustifiable rent increases, she said, and many also complained about inadequate services. (About 46 percent of the cases were resolved in favor of the tenants, 32 percent were in favor of the landlord; the remainder are still pending.)

Kathleen Richards

Rent prices in Oakland went up 11.2 percent this fiscal year

While Taylor couldn't pinpoint the exact reason for the spike in complaints, she noted that "when the economic indicators start to get better, there are more petitions filed because landlords feel more comfortable increasing the rent. When times aren't so good, they back off." (Calls to several local property managers were never returned.)

The complaints come from all over the city, she said, and weren't specific to a certain demographic. In other words, everyone seems to be affected.

It's the largest amount of complaints the city has seen since the 2007-08 fiscal year, which saw 425 complaints filed. That was followed by a three-year lull. Then, in July 2011, things picked up again. "Last year when this started, it started with maybe 18, 20, then 25 [complaints] per month," said Taylor. "Every month it kept building more and more. This fiscal year it's been more than thirty cases every single month. It's not backing down, even during the holiday season." As a result, Taylor said her department is looking to increase its staff size.

Despite the increase in filings, many Oakland residents may be unaware of the city's rent control ordinance and how and where to file complaints. "A lot of tenants, regardless of education levels, don't know that this exists," said Patricia Zamora, Oakland lead organizer and housing counselor coordinator for Causa Justa/Just Cause, which works to protect low-income residents in San Francisco and Oakland. "There's often a disadvantage if you're a monolingual speaker or you're lower income." Compared to Berkeley and San Francisco, Oakland has fewer resources devoted to protecting tenant rights, she added. Those cities have rent boards that hear cases, whereas in Oakland, cases are heard by a hearing officer and only go before the seven-member rent board in the case of an appeal.

As of July 1, 2012, Oakland's rent control ordinance allows landlords to increase rent by 3 percent (it changes yearly) and increases can only happen once a year. When a tenant moves out of a unit (either by his or her own volition, or in the case of a just eviction), the landlord may raise the rent by 3 percent or to the market rate, according to California's Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act. In other words, even if a housing unit is under the jurisdiction of the city's Rent Adjustment Program, the landlord can still raise the rent by more than 3 percent for a new tenant.

But many buildings are exempt from Oakland's rent control, including any building constructed after January 1, 1983, and those that have had substantial rehabilitation since then. Also excluded are most single-family residences and condos, duplexes and triplexes in which the landlord also lives, Section 8 housing and other subsidized units, and boats. In those cases, landlords can raise the rent price to any amount, at any time.

Local journalist Christin Ayers learned that truth the hard way. A little less than two years ago, when she moved into her studio apartment located in a new Uptown building (which she didn't want to name), she signed a one-year lease for $1,550 per month. The following year her landlord raised the rent to $1,705. Now, her landlord has said she can sign a six-month or year-long lease for $1,805, or switch to a month-to-month lease for $1,940. That's an increase of more than 16 percent in two years. According to Ayers, her landlord told her: "'Even if you paid $1,940, there are people who are willing to pay $2,000 for your apartment and your view.' To him, the problem is that Oakland has suddenly become in demand."

As a result, Ayers said she's looking to move. But her search has dampened her spirits. "I'm struggling to find a place for one person that's secure for less than $1,600 or $1,700 a month," she said. "I have a pretty good career and make a decent amount of money. ... I'm realizing that I can't have a doorman and washer/dryer if I want to be able to feed myself. I'm coming to the realization that I have to downgrade."

Oakland may be increasingly viewed as a desirable place to live, but that may change if rental prices continue to soar. As Traverso put it: "I love Oakland, but I'm not willing to be broke to live there." ●

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YEAR IN REVIEW

# THE FLIPPING FRENZY

Low inventory and high demand for Oakland real estate this year favored investors over first-time buyers

By Whitney Phaneuf

When Jordan Machardy and his girlfriend started looking to buy their first home in Oakland in June, they were optimistic. "We'd finally saved enough and knew it'd be cheaper than renting," Machardy said. Six months later, after spending nearly every weekend searching for a fixer-upper for less than $450,000 in neighborhoods that are within walking distance of BART, the couple is incredibly discouraged. "I feel like we've been priced out," Machardy said.

Although the couple had been easily approved for a conventional bank loan with a low interest rate, they discovered that they couldn't compete with investors who buy properties with cash and flip them quickly at much higher prices. This flipping frenzy has grabbed hold of Oakland's real estate market, especially in 2012. Machardy said they lost out repeatedly on homes that were sold to cash buyers, only to see those same homes relisted within a few months at prices too high for them to afford. Other times, they were simply outbid, most recently on a house in North Oakland where Machardy said they bid $115,000 above the asking price and included a clause that waived any contingencies.

The seller of that home received 21 offers. And if the house went to a cash buyer, which Machardy thinks was likely, that buyer will probably never live in the house. "They're making it so we can't compete to buy a home in the working class neighborhoods where we can afford to live," said Machardy, acknowledging that because he's an experienced contractor, his situation is somewhat unique because most buyers don't have the skill set to restore a distressed property. "It's a classic gentrification story, but this year in Oakland, it's like watching that story on steroids."

The flipping phenomenon has been developing slowly since the housing crisis began in 2008. Typically, in a foreclosure or short sale of a distressed property, banks prefer cash offers. A typical flip is completed in four weeks or less, depending on the condition of the property, and it's perfectly legal.

According to a report produced earlier this year by the Urban Strategies Council, a respected nonprofit that has analyzed Oakland's housing market, 42 percent of the 10,000 homes in Oakland that ended up in foreclosure from 2007 through October 2011 were purchased by investors — either at trustee sales on the courthouse steps or directly from financial institutions. Many of these homes were then later flipped at much higher prices.

But while the flipping trend has been tough on first-time homebuyers, it appears to have been a boon for the City of Oakland. The city recently reported an increase of $2.06 million in real estate transfer tax receipts in the fiscal year that ended June 30. According to Brad Johnson, a financial analyst for the city, the increase in real estate transfer tax revenue was caused primarily by rising home prices.

If you ask buyers like Machardy, the investors who flip properties for a quick profit are the enemy of working people. But if you ask Mila Zelkha, the image of the moneybags investor is only one side of the story. She contends that many people who flip homes for a living are middle-class, small business owners like her.

Zelkha argues that she and other independent investors have by no means made a killing doing flips, and claims that even some large investors have helped Oakland more than they've hurt it. She started in 2009, buying a foreclosed home in the Maxwell Park neighborhood. That first flip helped her buy another house, adding up to as many as ten that year, she recalled. It was a risk-averse market back then and she was often the only bidder on the properties. That year and through 2010, she said her return on investment ranged anywhere from 25 to 35 percent. By 2011, she had a $1 million investment fund dedicated to Oakland flips, but she soon realized the market had changed. Many new investors had jumped into Oakland real estate, foreclosures had slowed down, which meant even less inventory, and returns diminished to 15 to 20 percent. Unable to meet investor expectations, Zelkha dissolved the fund and walked away.

But unlike most people and investors who do flips, Zelkha said she cared about the quality of her work. A designer by trade, she said her flips won multiple local awards for restoring historic homes and using green building upgrades. She admitted that she probably didn't represent the norm, noting that most flips are done to turn the highest profit. "Those IKEA cabinets may look nice for awhile, but it's just trash," she said.

In addition to her own projects, Zelkha also worked on flips for two of the city's largest investors, Community Fund LLC and REO Homes LLC. "Sometimes there is nothing wrong with large players who know what they're doing," said Zelkha, adding that these investors have flipped many blighted homes that few homeowners have the ability to restore. "People don't realize how many risks go into this work or how complicated it can be."

First-time homeowner Maureen Lee bought a flip with her boyfriend in the Laurel neighborhood after months of looking in San Francisco, Berkeley, and other neighborhoods in Oakland. Lee, a manager in online advertising, said they didn't care about being close to BART and knew they'd have to forego the excitement of being in a hot neighborhood like Temescal. Instead, they focused on finding the right house in their price range. They found it in a flipped two-bedroom house, which had gone into foreclosure and was bought by an investor who works in real estate as a listing agent. He paid $170,000 in December 2011, and Lee and her boyfriend bought it for $369,950 in June 2012. Lee's realtor, Wendy Graves, emphasized that the flip was well done with many energy efficiency upgrades, but added that she has also witnessed the "pitfalls of flipping too quickly." Graves said that, at a minimum, buyers should do their research to find out whether a property has been flipped and should pay for a thorough property inspection and pest report. Zelkha also recommends that buyers review the building-permit history.

As for Machardy and his girlfriend, they're still hoping to land their Oakland home. For now, they'll keep paying inflated San Francisco rents until they find a place to buy, and they're even willing to buy a flipped home now — if one in their price range comes to market. But, Machardy said, these days that feels like a big "if." ●

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Many first-time buyers with bank loans can't compete with investors armed with cash. Whitney Phaneuf

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YEAR IN REVIEW

# THE YEAR OAKLAND EXPLODED

## For the first time in recent memory, Oakland's being noticed for its culture, not its crime rate. Is that a good thing?

By Ellen Cushing

[illegible]

Art Murmur has become a roiling street party.

No one seems to be able to pinpoint exactly when or why Art Murmur exploded the way it did in 2012, but it's pretty obvious that what happened was swift, total, and huge. What began in 2005 as a small, simple, scrappy event devised in a coffee shop and oriented toward the relatively rarefied niche of art fans and galleries bloomed this year into a sprawling, roiling street party that requires extensive street closures and significant city and private resources to contain. According to Samee Roberts, director of marketing for the City of Oakland, the event's attendance has increased by a factor of roughly five in 2012, meaning an estimated 25,000 people are now packing the streets of downtown Oakland each month. "It was just sort of this thing that happened. It's hard to explain exactly why."

Yes and no. All of this comes in context of a San Francisco that's pricing out its creative class and an Oakland that's welcoming it with open arms, of a city that continues to bring in new residents, new business, and new life even in the wake of a recession and the shadow of the tech-rich Silicon Valley. San Franciscans — even, in some cases, those who can afford rent and housing prices in the City — are moving across the bay in droves; of the four such transplants I spoke to for this story, all pointed to Oakland's culture as part or all of the reason for their move. City revenues are up, and new businesses are opening at a rapid clip. Gentrification debates — and they are valid, legion, and intractable — aside, it's clear that something's happening here, and First Fridays are more likely the effect than the cause.

And the rest of the country has taken notice. Only six days after it began, 2012 was already an auspicious year for Oakland in the eyes of the media. That's when *The New York Times* placed the city at Number 5 on its list of 45 places to go in 2012, declaring that "new restaurants and bars beckon amid the grit." By April, the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* was asking "Is Oakland Cooler than San Francisco?" in block lettering on its front page — a question whose answer may have always seemed obvious on this side of the bay, but which was clearly a newsworthy one for the *Guardian*'s editors. Just this month, *Vogue* published a web piece about the city's nightlife and dining, and 7x7, of all publications, came out with a list of "50 Things to Do in Oakland Before You Die," noting that "The Town ... [has] a vibrant arts culture, incredible foodie scene and strong sense of community and history all to itself." In October, the *Times* ran a story about First Fridays' growth; the same month, news broke that ABC was developing a television pilot set in Oakland.

All of which was met largely with an odd mixture of pride and apprehension. On the one hand, Oakland is, in many ways, finally living up to some of its long-held ambitions — of a thriving arts scene, a vital downtown, a growing economy — and it's gratifying to see the national media is now taking notice. "I haven't seen this kind of positive press since maybe 2002, when the Raiders were in the Super Bowl, or 1989," said Oakland native Matt Werner, who recently wrote a book, *Oakland in Popular Memory*, about the city's arts scene and public perception. "At the end of the day, I like to see any non-homicide-related press."

At the same time, though, there's a certain strain of what can feel a lot like condescension running through many of these stories. The same *Times* article that hailed Art Murmur also invoked both "low-flying police helicopters" and Gertrude Stein's famous (and famously misinterpreted) would-be affront, "There is no there there." As Lukas Brekke-Miesner wrote in a January 7 post on the blog 38th Notes: "The *Times* juxtaposes Oakland's former 'grit' with its apparent bangin' rebirth as though the city wasn't worth two cents before San Francisco chefs descended upon it." The post then went on to quote poet and playwright Chinaka Hodge: "I take issue with the idea that Oakland is worth visiting only because new has supplanted old. ... That notion supposes that everything I've loved about my city for the last 27 years is void."

Nearly a year later, Brekke-Miesner expanded on his points in an interview. "It's clearly a complicated issue when you're talking about a city that's been so underdog and in the shadows for so long," he said. "[Seeing this coverage] is bittersweet. ... I want to see a more nuanced perspective on a very complicated place."

It seems, then, that there's no real consensus as to how we'd like the media to cover Oakland. The one high-profile story that bucked the rose-colored trend — a sprawling dissection of Occupy and Oakland's radical politics for the *Times* magazine that portrayed the city as "urban, dangerous, and poor," "the last refuge of radical America" that's slowly being upset by gentrification — sparked, in its three hundred-plus comments, a heated debate between those who thought it focused too much on urban strife and those who thought it did the opposite.

Because what makes media coverage of Oakland complicated is the same thing that makes living in Oakland complicated. To live in and love this city is also, necessarily, to feel deep ambivalence about it. "I love Oakland," said Brekke-Miesner. "But part of the love is that you're loving something so imperfect."

After all, even if 2012 was the year to visit Oakland, it was also the year at least 121 people were killed here, for a homicide rate that, at press time, threatened to reach a five-year high. The same city that spawned and supported First Fridays has yet to find a sustainable funding model for it: Roberts said keeping the event alive as it is will require raising "a couple hundred thousand dollars." And precisely what makes First Fridays fun, what made Occupy flourish, what makes Oakland attractive to insiders and outsiders alike — its unruliness, its organicity and viscerality, a quality that the *Times* has likened to an "unsettled urban frontier" and that the writer Ishmael Reed called, in his 2003 ode to Oakland, *Blues City*, "brawling and husky" — is also what can make these things scary. An understaffed police force is great when you want to throw a street party or a sideshow, less so when you're robbed.

THIS IS A CITY WITH IMMENSE OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALLY IMMENSE CHALLENGES, A CITY THAT ... REALLY DOES HAVE BOTH MICHELIN-STARRED RESTAURANTS AND ITS FAIR SHARE OF THE TIMES' "GRIT." ...

This is a city with immense opportunities and equally immense challenges, a city that, when all's said and done, really does have both Michelin-starred restaurants and its fair share of the *Times*' "grit," even if we wouldn't necessarily describe it that way. It's a city whose downtown corridor is drawing well-deserved accolades while the vast swaths to the east and west are under-covered and overlooked, still rife with violence and poverty. It's a city that's managed to make and remake itself in innumerable ways, but it's also a place where systemic problems have festered for generations. It is, in other words, a city that encapsulates many of the ambitions and anxieties of postindustrial America. Oakland's complexity is also what's made it a useful metaphor for what Reed termed "a newly emerging America"; perhaps that's why Art Murmur and Oakland have become, in Roberts' words, "a local story that's gone national." What remains to be seen is where the story ends and how it's told. ●

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# THE YEAR OF THE BOUTIQUE

Despite the downturned economy, 2012 may be remembered as the year Oakland became a shopping destination

By Kathleen Richards

When Governor Jerry Brown decided to eliminate redevelopment agencies statewide, it appeared to crush Oakland's dream of turning the Broadway-Valdez Triangle into a large outdoor mall (see "Death of a Retail Plan," 2/15/12). But it appears the people have taken matters into their own hands.

In the past year, there's been a quiet explosion of new boutiques in Oakland. These small, independently owned stores have given a much-needed retail boost to a city that leaks $1 billion a year to neighboring cities with better shopping options.

Starting at the end of 2011, we've seen the opening of the cluster of stores in Old Oakland's popuphood — including Crown Nine, Marion & Rose's Workshop, Paper and John General Goods, and Umami Mart — plus the arrival of OwlNWood, Oakland Surf Club, Oak Common, Show & Tell, and Resurrect, not to mention the numerous businesses in Temescal Alley, which keep coming (like Standard & Strange). That adds to relative newcomers like Hatwood Vintage, Mercy Vintage, Good Stock, The Rare Bird, and others. In other words, there's finally a palpable sense of momentum in Oakland's retail sector, and it's all happening on a very organic level.

"I believe there's a renaissance happening — everyone can feel it," said Rachel Konte, who opened OwlNWood on West Grand Avenue in August.

Although these stores largely opened independently of each other, there's a common theme tying many of them together: community mindedness, a genuine love of Oakland, and the desire to support sustainably, locally, and US-made products. These aren't the kind of cookie-cutter stores that carry all the same labels that you'll find in San Francisco. Some of these boutiques function as arts boosters, too (Oakland Surf Club has an upstairs gallery). They also have a heightened sense of design and style that's been sorely lacking in the East Bay. Forget frumpy wear: The East Bay is ready to step out in (sustainable) style.

So why now? And why Oakland? "There's not a lot of clothing stores in Oakland," said Ari Serrano-Embree, explaining why she opened Oakland Surf Club in July with her husband, Max Kinneman. The store, located on 14th Street in downtown, carries a mix of men's and women's clothing and accessories with a focus on denim, and surf culture. "I grew up in Oakland, so I wanted to be here as opposed to the City," she continued.

Konte expressed a similar sentiment. "This is where I live. I was always so confused why downtown was so empty."

"People need cool things," said Alfonso Dominguez, who co-founded popuphood with Sarah Filley, and who also runs the Old Oakland restaurant Tamarindo Antojeria Mexicana with his mother. "There are plenty of cool existing people here, and they don't need to spend their money somewhere else."

Of course, as Dominguez noted, boutiques have popped up in Oakland before, but many didn't survive — including his own, Drift Denim. "When the real estate bust happened, they all closed down," he said.

But in many ways, the downturned economy is helping to spawn this influx of new retail. After all, popuphood started in response to the many empty storefronts in Old Oakland. The idea was to populate them with carefully chosen, locally owned retail stores to not only reinvigorate the neighborhood but also create a more sustainable local economy. "That's what makes cities thrive, is that money stays in the community," said Dominguez. "That's what retail does." Dominguez and Filley, using seed money from Oakland's redevelopment agency (when it was still available), convinced landlords to give businesses six months of free rent in order to give them time to get established. By all measures, the experiment has been a success. Today, Dominguez says the majority of the businesses are negotiating leases with their landlords. "Even if one or two sign a lease, it's a success," he said.

Similarly, it wasn't until Konte was laid off from her job at Levi's in 2009 that she decided to pursue her longtime dream of having her own store. But it took her three years to bring her idea to fruition. "It was more difficult than I thought," she said, noting that she looked at locations in San Francisco and Berkeley before deciding on her Oakland spot.

Crown Nine, run by Kate Ellen, is one of several businesses part of Old Oakland's popuphood.

OwlNWood mixes Scandinavian brands (Konte is from Denmark) with locally designed products and vintage items for men and women. "I have a lot of local designers here," she said on a recent afternoon in the office space overlooking her store. "Many are friends from the industry who lost their jobs." Since she's opened her doors, Konte said a steady stream of craftspeople come by to try and get her to carry their products. "It has its own life," she said about her store.

Most importantly, however, these boutiques are attracting not only artists and designers but actual customers, too. All the business owners interviewed for this story reported that sales were better than they expected. Neal Barrett and Jeremy Smith, co-owners of Standard & Strange, which opened in Temescal Alley in September, said they have customers coming from San Francisco for their hard-to-find items. Initially, they opened the tiny men's boutique, which specializes in US-made clothing from small labels, as a combination of retail and office space for their brand of cycling wear, Cedar Cycling. But the reception has been strong. "The store has taken off — it more than pays for itself," said Smith. "There's a lot demand for American-made stuff."

The focus on locally or US-made products has a two-fold purpose, it turns out. Not only does it support independent designers and thus, the local economy, but it also allows storeowners to keep low inventory. "It makes it easier to manage cash flow," said Smith. And Kinneman noted that if there's a problem with his store's inventory, the issue can usually be resolved much more quickly than it can with large companies.

Already, these new business owners are expanding their sights. Serrano-Embree said she'd like to open a women's-only shop one day. Due to demand, Barrett and Smith are looking to expand their inventory. And Dominguez says popuphood is currently working with KONO, the Koreatown Northgate Business Improvement District, to bring a version of popuphood to that neighborhood. He hopes to one day open a popup boutique hotel, to attract more visitors to the city.

However, all that may hinge on whether this latest round of boutiques can survive. Certainly, there is a level of excitement in Oakland that only seems to be increasing. And, as evidenced by the annual retail leakage, demand isn't a problem. Ultimately, it may be an issue of changing people's shopping habits. ●

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# THE HOTTEST TEAM IN THE 510

In another dismal year for East Bay sports teams, the Oakland A's and their fans enjoyed a season for the ages.

By Kibby Kleiman

True East Bay sports fans realize that the teams we love make playoff runs only in rare, magical years, as if you are a Raiders fan, like the mythical village of Brigadoon, once every hundred years. This year it was King A-doon, as the Oakland baseball team won its division for the first time this decade and then celebrated by being sucked back into the mist. Jonny Gomes and Brandon McCarthy, the heart and soul of the 2012 A's, will begin 2013 as members of the Boston Red Sox and Arizona Diamondbacks, respectively. So as the San Francisco Giants enjoy their championship by re-signing their stars and scrubs to lavish contracts and the San Francisco 49ers waltz toward the playoffs while boasting two quality NFL quarterbacks, we in the East Bay can either rage against the stacked deck, or celebrate that we got dealt a flush for a change.

The Golden State Warriors, who started the 2012-13 campaign in first place and will finish the 2017 season in San Francisco, may be tantalizing their local fan base with their second playoff appearance since the first Clinton administration — and the ball is now in their spectator's court. Do you fret about the future, about building a foundation? Or do you just say, "Fuck it, these guys are moving out of town in five years, let's jump on the Draymond Green Express?" Having experienced 2012 with the Mystery A's, we can say while clutching our BART ticket with one hand and a foam finger in the other — All aboard!

The A's won their last championship in 1989 — and that makes them the hottest team going in the 510. The Raiders won their last Oakland title in 1980. The Warriors won once in 1974. Cal basketball ruled the roost in 1959, and the football team won the Rose Bowl in 1938. Happy Depression, Golden Bears! It is painfully obvious that if we wait for titles, this might be a rough millennium.

This year began with some favorite local traditions: the Raiders fired their coach, Warriors fans booed their owner off the court, and the A's traded everything that wasn't nailed down. The baseball club that had been bad for five years was poised to be worse; its marketing campaign focused on waiting for 40-year-old Manny Ramirez to end his suspension. Thrilling! The A's then lost their very first game of the season in Japan. Then they lost their very first game in Oakland. They were the worst team in each hemisphere! Two weeks into the season, the A's were in last place and their magic number was 408. The only time the national press spoke about the team was to ask the A's whether San Jose or Fremont would look better on their jerseys. The club lost nine in a row to end May, and there was no reason to presume summer would be any brighter: rookie pitchers, everyone playing the wrong position, hitters using their bats as canes to walk back to the dugout, leading the civilized world in strike outs, and then All Star Ryan Cook, selected because every team gets a player selected, losing his job shortly after the game.

Then suddenly, the A's started winning. June was good. July was better. The A's had already defied the odds; how hard was it to defy the laws of gravity? What went up kept going up. August was great. September greater still. While baseball's cognoscenti were calculating whether the A's maybe could snatch the first or second wild card spot, the A's blew past that stop sign and set their sights on winning a division owned and operated by two baseball plutocracies, the Los Angeles Angels and Texas Rangers, who between them had won every league title but one since 2004. The last weekend of the season saw Oakland beat Seattle every game in every way, and still trailing first place Texas by two games with three games left to play.

The A's took the wild card, partied hard, and were scolded for squandering their energies on champagne, cigars, and god knows what else the TV cameras left. Hung-over or inspired, the Athletics won the first two games over the Rangers to tie for the division lead, the highest perch for the team in years. The last game of the season found the A's with a puncher's chance, which they pulled when they fell behind 5-1 about a minute after the National Anthem had been sung. But then October, which was turning out to be a more glorious month than the four that had come before, began to pour down on Texas. Ground balls with eyes found holes in the Rangers defence, and a fly ball on a mission was dropped by their All-World outfielder Josh Hamilton. The A's crossed the plate five times in one inning, and since it felt so good, just kept doing it until the umpire said, "Nine innings of this is plenty," and the A's were on the right side of a 12-5 score.

A playoff series with Detroit started with an A's home run, and ended with a tiger-like roar from a fan base supercharged into telling the A's' penurious owners into taking off the hated seating tarps that extol past glories but render thousands of seats underneath unavailable to actually sit in. The A's lost the rubber game of the series and never got to sit in the forbidden seats, but rightly stood and applauded the most enjoyable baseball season in Oakland history. There have been teams that won more in the green and gold, but none that made anyone happier.

But 2012 also was the year that Cal fired its football coach, the Raiders were their usual pathetic show, and the Warriors' newest acquisition fell apart like a cheap watch — which everyone kind of expected and yet still booed. The A's, meanwhile, are spending the winter dismantling whatever magic the year brought. And it will all fade from the record. Twenty years from now someone will discover that in 2012 the A's won a division and got bounced in the first round of the playoffs, and then shrug and wonder that the A's once played in Oakland.

This year, those who saw it will say, "Oh yes, did they ever." ●

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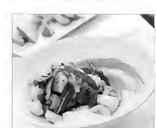

The sweet potato gnocchi at Hopscotch is understated Asian fusion at its finest.

Stephen Loewinsohn

YEAR IN REVIEW

# BEST BITES OF 2012

Crispy carnitas + deconstructed shepherd's pie + better-than-East-Coast bagels – one delicious year in the East Bay

By Luke Tsai

Tis the season for self-reflection, good will toward man, and the compiling of top-ten lists. Here in the East Bay, this was the year of the gastropub — bars serving bone marrow and house-cured charcuterie, leaving many traditional restaurants in the dust — and high-end sandwich shops and food truck "pods." It was the year of artisan doughnuts and bagels (so many tasty round, doughy things) and the refined comforts of the Japanese *izakaya*. I ate plenty of delicious items in 2012 — Rio California's soulful *feijoada*, FiveTenBurger's simple, flawless burger, and Kang Tong Degi's sublimely comforting *budae jjigae* — but for this list I limited it to new dishes.

Given those parameters, here are my ten best bites of the year, presented in no particular order.

## Shepherd's Pie at Haven

Where chef Kim Alter excels is in her wild, modernist riffs on comfort food classics. Perhaps the best example: Ever since Haven opened (almost exactly one year ago), Alter has been serving a kind of deconstructed shepherd's pie during the winter months. The version I ate entirely left out the pub classic's two primary ingredients — lamb and mashed potatoes — and instead substituted ground pork butt, crispy fried fingerling potatoes, and a white potato foam. It was like no other shepherd's pie I'd eaten — better, I think, because it was lighter and less starchy, without sacrificing the dish's soulful, comforting elements.

*Haven, 44 Webster St., Oakland, 510-663-4440, HavenOakland.com*

## Kiraku's Corn Tempura with Green Tea Salt

The most wildly inventive of the East Bay's trio of new top-notch *izakayas* (along with B-Dama and Ippuku), Kiraku serves up a panoply of out-of-the-ordinary dishes featuring obscure ingredients (at least to the typical Western diner) and unlikely flavor combinations: fermented firefly squid, shark's soft bone, stewed daikon radish topped (before the ban) with foie gras. Still, the most memorable dish I ate at Kiraku was deceptively simple: sweet corn kernels that were tempura fried until they formed crunchy little fritters, then sprinkled with green tea salt for just a hint of intrigue.

*Kiraku, 2566B Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-2758, KirakuBerkeley.com*

## Casa Jimenez's Carnitas Estilo Michoacán

If you eat out in Oakland with any regularity, you likely already know that the most satisfying dishes often aren't found at fancy, $25-an-entrée temples of gastronomy. Like Kreayshawn said: "We don't eat that shit in Oakland. ... We eat out the taco truck in Oakland." Or if not the taco truck, then the workmanlike Mexican joint that serves some the best carnitas you'll find outside of Michoacán proper: pork shoulder roasted in the oven until it's crisp-edged but still gloriously fatty and tender. Served with guacamole and thick, piping hot corn tortillas, it's pretty much the perfect meal.

*Casa Jimenez Family Restaurant, 4345 International Blvd., Oakland, 510-842-8996*

## Cafe Q's Pulled Pork Sandwich

Continuing on the roasted pork theme: at Cafe Q, chef Jesse Branstetter submerges boneless pork butt in rendered bacon fat and roasts it — low and slow, as they say in the trade — until you're left with something that's not barbecue (as the "pulled pork" designation might imply) but has that sublime combination of crisp, tender, unctuous, and smoky that makes pork the king of meats. Shred that meat and put it on a burger bun, topped simply with avocado slices and a light cabbage slaw, and you've got a sandwich that'll blow minds.

*Cafe Q, 2302 Encinal Ave., Alameda, 510-521-8848, CafeQAlameda.com*

## Tanzanian Fish at Soleil's African Cuisine

As a fish best known for being boring and, well, not really tasting like fish, the tilapia doesn't get a lot of love from chefs or food writers. But at Soleil's African Cuisine, the unheralded fish is the star in the restaurant's signature dish of Tanzanian fish. A perfectly grilled tilapia fillet serves as the blank canvas for a mellow, lick-your-plate-worthy sauce made from coconut milk, spinach, puréed tomatoes, and sundry African spice. Add some fried plantains, a mound of fragrant *jollof* rice, and a dash of the house-made *piri piri* hot sauce, and you have a plate of food fit for even the most persnickety (or fish snobby) of eaters.

*Soleil's African Cuisine (inside The Frog and Fiddle), 1544 Webster St., Alameda, 510-228-6747, SoleilsAfricanCuisine.com*

## Sushi Sho's Spicy Mentaiko Nigiri

Fans of *Jiro Dreams of Sushi* (maybe the food porniest of all food porn films) should note that in the East Bay, the closest you can come to that kind of sushi-as-religious-experience is at a tiny El Cerrito sushi bar, where the long waits are totally worth it. Given that the best sushi meals are like a well-orchestrated symphony, it's hard to highlight a single best dish. Was it the grilled-to-order *anago*, the lush cold-smoked salmon, or the smooth, impossibly thick *tamago* (egg omelet)? In the end, my vote goes to the *mentaiko* (salted cod roe). The fishiest item in a restaurant full of fish, this nigiri is like the essence of the sea itself condensed into a single briny bite.

*Sushi Sho, 10749 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, 510-525-1800*

## Hopscotch's Sweet Potato Gnocchi

Here's what I think about when I think about fall: fried sage leaves (delicate and deeply earthy), roasted Japanese sweet potatoes, browned butter, and meaty wild mushrooms (oyster, shiitake, Hen of the Woods) that are sautéed until they're intoxicatingly aromatic. Put all of those elements on a plate, and you'll have Hopscotch's sweet potato gnocchi — comfort food for a chilly evening, and a perfect example of chef Kyle Itani's understated, California-inflected take on Asian fusion cuisine.

*Hopscotch, 1915 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, 510-788-6217, HopscotchOakland.com*

## Bagel Platter at Stag's Lunchette

Having already written some 10,000 words about the Bay Area's bagel renaissance, I'll keep this brief. Of the new crop of artisan bagels in the East Bay (all of which have their charms), Baron Baking's crisp, well-blistered specimens are the best. And the best way to eat one is by ordering the bagel platter at Stag's Lunchette. Served open-faced and topped with scallion cream cheese, house-smoked trout, and capers, it's about as close to the platonic ideal of a bagel sandwich as you'll ever find.

*Stag's Lunchette, 362 17th St., Oakland, 510-835-7824, StagsLunchette.com*

## "Oyako" Sandwich at Grand Lake Kitchen

Things are made a hundred times better by the addition of crispy fried chicken skin: fried chicken (duh), any kind of taco, and just about any dish where you'd normally use plain old bacon. Thanks to Oakland's newly opened Grand Lake Kitchen, you can add egg salad to that list. The "Oyako" is an open-faced sandwich: a generous portion of super moist, mayo-heavy egg salad served on top of thick slices of toasted rye. It would be delicious even unadorned, but the shards of crispy, smoky chicken skin sprinkled on top launches the sandwich into another stratosphere altogether.

*Grand Lake Kitchen, 576 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-922-9582, GrandLakeKitchen.com*

## Chocolate Peppermint Cream Mini Pie at PieTisserie

What better way to finish a meal — or a top-ten list — than with pie? Especially if that pie is as good as the creations PieTisserie's Jaynelle St. Jean serves from her old-fashioned pie window inside Nido (a Mexican restaurant). Eating St. Jean's single-serving chocolate peppermint cream mini pie (a holiday special, also available as a regular-sized pie) is like taking a bite into Christmas itself. The smooth, scratch-made peppermint-infused chocolate cream tastes like a grown-up, not-too-sweet version of an Andes mint. Best of all, the flaky, all-butter crust is as delicate and shatteringly crisp as any I've ever had. San Franciscans trolling on this side of the bay, take note: The pie reminded me of no less a pastry than Tartine Bakery's legendarily drool-worthy cream tarts — except quite a bit better.

*PieTisserie, 444 Oak St., Oakland, 510-859-7437, PieTisserie.com* ●

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MONDAY
DECEMBER 31
9PM
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[illegible] conductor
SUSANNA PHILLIPS soprano
LANCE THROUGH TIME dancers
SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

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YEAR IN REVIEW

# DJS MAY BE THE NEW ROCK STARS, BUT SUCCESS HAS A PRICE

The pressures of being a superstar DJ don't leave artists much room to grow

By Whitney Phaneuf

Despite the fact that 2012 may go down as one of the biggest years for American electronic music, with DJs becoming the new young-money rock stars, we may look back on this year as the moment the genre started to die before it actually began. Take dubstep — one small part of the electronic music scene — which became a fad before it had any long-term future. In the shuffle of too much touring and the pressure to be insanely prolific, artists ultimately had no downtime to innovate. In the case of local breakout star Bassnectar, he seemed to lose his conviction — and, more importantly — to stop having fun.

Electronic music has long been part of the Bay Area music landscape, with a thriving San Francisco club scene and underground parties fueled, for the most part, by the Burning Man community. Bassnectar's brand of West Coast glitch and hip-hop-inspired dubstep catapulted him into the ranks of superstar American producer/DJs like deadmau5 and Skrillex, the latter winning three Grammys this year. According to *Forbes* list of the Top 10 biggest earners in dance music, Skrillex made $15 million in 2012, deadmau5 made $11.5 million, and, although he's not on the list, Bassnectar makes anywhere from $75,000 to $100,000 per show and plays about 150 shows a year, according to an *SF Weekly* article. That's anywhere from $11.2 million to $15 million a year, and it's all from touring. Like most artists these days, Bassnectar gives his music away for free online.

Part of me is incredibly proud of the 34-year-old Bassnectar (né Lorin Ashton) — he's paid his dues and he's become one of the best DJs in American dance music. But he's been better too: more experimental, more daring, and more resistant to play to the lowest common denominator (i.e., frat boys, macho bros, teenage candy ravers). Compare his mid-2000s releases *Mesmerizing the Ultra* and *Underground Communication* to this year's five releases, among them *Vava Voom* and the *Freestyle EP*, and you'll hear the difference between creativity and mediocrity.

Bassnectar built his following slowly and carefully in the underground scene and at Burning Man. That was where I first heard him in 2007, and by then Bassnectar's sets were already the stuff of legend. His devotees were a typical Burning Man crowd — post-apocalyptic/steampunk, black leather-clad dreadlocked tribal hippies sucking on nitrous-oxide-filled balloons — who tensed their bodies to his every bass-throttled beat. And it was tense: The former drummer's flow — his instinctual ability to insert choppy beats, complex rhythms, and zigzag tempos, and then suddenly drop in a melodic Pones sample — was like nothing I had heard before in my decade of dancing at raves. After that I tried to see Bassnectar whenever I had the opportunity.

Avery Cold Ile

Bassnectar seems to have lost his conviction

Fast-forward to 2010, the last year Bassnectar played a set at Burning Man, and the style he'd developed playing locally and nationally had gained mainstream radio play, mostly in the form of dubstep remixes of Top 40 pop songs. The trend soon snowballed. Dubstep found its way into a McDonald's commercial, provided the soundtrack to dancing babies on YouTube, and laced the beats in nearly every Top-40 single and many hip-hop tracks. And, like mainstream hip-hop, dubstep catapulted out of white suburbs, the mentality of its listeners being "drop the bass" — trance-like builds that culminate into a vibrating climax of overwhelming, wobbly bass.

This is the point when many electronic music fans and critics say everything went wrong and the genre became formulaic, bubblegum dance music for the masses — but it's not that simple. Bassnectar and Skrillex rose to DJ stardom because they'd been honing their craft for some time — it wasn't just a trend, it was their art. Among the two, Skrillex took the heat for turning the genre into "brostep," dance music for neon-clad, upwardly mobile white boys.

It's been a little over a year since I saw Bassnectar play a sold-out show at Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. Gone were the Burners, and in their place were the bros with their pacifier-sucking, half-naked girlfriends. But that wasn't my issue with the show. Bassnectar's set was almost perfect: he still had the power to bring the crowd up and take it down with his odd mix of tempos and samples, but the music hadn't progressed. Bassnectar had once used the decks as a political platform, giving Public Enemy-style speeches about the oppression of government and our precious freedom, telling us to be grateful for the right to, well, party. There was none of that at Bill Graham, and no surprises either. My friends and I walked out of the venue, laughing about how old we felt and talking about "that one time" Bassnectar pulled off sampling The Beatles' "Strawberry Fields Forever." Those were the days. ●

WhitneyPhaneuf@EastBayExpress.com

# HOW TO PARTY PROPERLY ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

Whether you want to dance til morning or be in bed by midnight, we've got the rundown on the best events happening this year

By Lenika Cruz, Ellen Cushing, Azeen Ghorayshi, Whitney Phaneuf, Luke Tsai

## Tom Jonesing

If celebrating what's new (pussycat) with none other than the Bay Area's premiere Tom Jones cover band at none other than Alameda's Number One tiki destination doesn't sound like your idea of a good time, well, you don't deserve to have one. Ticket price (which Forbidden Island helpfully reminds us is "cheaper than a flight to Vegas for a dinner show") covers hors d'oeuvres, a light buffet, no fewer than three drinks, and, of course, the vocal and piano stylings of Tom Jonesing, aka "The Tickler" R. and "Tantric Tom" Stefanson X, aka the BEST POSSIBLE THING to have in your eardrums as 2012 slips away. The show runs 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., after which the bar will be open to everyone (though TJ attendees get to skip the line if they leave and come back.) — *E.C.*

**Details:** At Forbidden Island Tiki Lounge (1304 Lincoln Ave., Alameda) 6 p.m., $75

**Drink of choice:** Sex on the beach, obvs.

**What to wear:** Your finest leisure suit.

**Hipster quotient:** 0/5

**Inebriation:** 4/5

**Meat market:** 2/5 (extra credit for cougars)

## Street Snacks and Dancing at Comal

Sometimes it seems like every restaurant in town on New Year's Eve has the same kind of ho-hum, overpriced prix-fixe dinner menu, the same flute of champagne for midnight toasting. For something different, consider heading over to Comal, where starting at 9 p.m. the stylish Mexican eatery will clear out all its tables for a Latin-and-funk dance party that, weather permitting, should spill out onto the restaurant's beautiful back patio. Meanwhile, chef Matt Gandin will keep a selection of special off-menu Oaxacan-style *antojitos* (street snacks) coming out all night: *flautas* (a kind of rolled taco with an herbaceous *hoja santa* leaf pressed into the tortilla), *tlayudas* (crunchy tortillas served with a variety of toppings), and other masa-based items that merrymakers will be able to eat with their hands. This isn't a sit-down dinner by any stretch, but general manager Andrew Hoffman promises there will be plenty of food — enough to serve as dinner, if you're so inclined. Tickets include food for the whole night; drinks will need to be purchased à la carte. — *L.T.*

**Details:** At Comal (2020 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley) 9 p.m., $25 in advance, $30 at the door.

**Go if:** Artisanal mezcal is more your style than Dom Perignon.

Comedian Brent Weinbach performs at Herbst Theater

**Beware of:** Guacamole on the dance floor!

**Foodie street cred.** 4/5

**Hipster street cred.** 2/5

## POPNYE at Oracle (Oakland)

POPNYE is not the time or place to think about your New Year's resolutions. Drink less? Exercise more? Find a hobby? Avoid that thinking and remember that you are a beautiful god/goddess of the night. Arguably the biggest New Year's Eve celebration in the entire Bay Area, POPNYE will bring together some of the leading names in trance (Above & Beyond, Ferry Corsten, and Dash Berlin, all of who are playing at Winter Wonderland in Anaheim earlier that evening, weirdly enough) together in one gigantic feel-good (wink, wink) bash, replete with a ridiculous lightshow and special effects. — *L.C.*

**Details:** At the Oracle Arena (7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland) 9 p.m., $60-$110.

**Beware of:** Scalpers.

**What to wear:** Anything gauzy, sparkly, or see-through, preferably bejeweled.

**Hipster quotient:** 3/5

**Inebriation:** 5/5

**Meat market:** 5/5

## thePeople NYE BoB

More is not always better with New Year's Eve parties. Thankfully, organizers of the monthly party thePeople understand that. DJ and producer Rich Medina will spin hip-hop, jazz, house, and future soul, melding a down-home feeling with a sense of elevation through his spoken-word and highly conscious lyrics. Something of a worldwide phenomenon who has worked or performed with Q-Tip, The Roots, Lauryn Hill, Erykah Badu, Seun Kuti, and Gil Scott-Heron, Medina knows how to get people moving. — *L.C.*

**Details:** At The New Parish (579 18th St., Oakland) 9 p.m., $10-$20

**Go if:** You're not into the decadence of bigger parties.

**Drink of choice:** Corona with lime.

**Hipster quotient:** 3/5

**Inebriation:** 3/5

**Meat market:** 4/5

## Erykah Badu with The Coup

Since her debut album in 1997, Erykah Badu has set out to do one thing and do it well — simply be herself. The neo-soul singer embraced by everyone from rappers to New Age hippies could have capitalized on her mainstream appeal, but instead worked to innovate her sound, be it jazz, R&B, or political hip-hop inspired by her African heritage. Badu pours intense emotion into her live shows, playing hits like "On and On," "Tyrone," and "Honey," plus tracks from her latest, 2010's *New Amerykah Part Two (Return of the Ankh)*, a surreal pop album that's both experimental and accessible. Oakland's The Coup will warm up the crowd with a high-energy set of booty-shaking bass lines and funky hip-hop. — *W.P.*

**Details:** At The Fox Theater (1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland) 9 p.m., $59.50-$75.

**Go if:** You're craving a night surrounded by good vibes and grown-ups.

**What to wear:** Bohemian-chic with a side of street.

**Hipster quotient:** 2/5

**Inebriation:** 2/5

**Meat market:** 3/5

## New Year's Eve Day Party

Little kids don't need to be excluded from New Year's festivities just because the show goes down after their bedtimes. Join the Lawrence Hall of Science for a daytime New Year's extravaganza. Kids can watch the New Year begin in countries all over the world on the Hall's huge Science on a Sphere globe, while also crafting their very own New Year's noisemakers. At 2 p.m., they'll put their noisemakers to use during the big balloon drop, featuring hundreds of colorful balloons. Toast to 2013 with sparkling apple cider and call it a year — all by early afternoon! — *A.G.*

**Details:** At Lawrence Hall of Science (1 Centennial Dr., Berkeley) Noon-2 p.m., $6 for kids age three to six, $9 for kids age seven to eighteen, $12 for adults.

**Go if:** Your kid is young enough to be convinced New Year's happens while the sun is still out.

**Bring:** Earplugs (again, I repeat: noisemakers, small children, and the inevitable popping balloons.)

**Cool dad quotient:** 5/5

**Inebriation:** 0/5

## Not Your Normal New Year's Eve

For those looking for a New Year's Eve that's slightly more offbeat, look no further than the fourth annual "Not Your Normal New Year's Eve" at Herbst Theater in San Francisco. The opulent venue will host a night of "hilariously unconventional" comedians, including Emo Philips — who Jay Leno described as "the best joke writer in America" — late-night talk show regular Brent Weinbach, and improv master Jill Bourque. The night of laughs will also feature the musical stylings of SF chamber pop band the Foxtails Brigade, and will be capped off with the ever-pleasing massive balloon drop. — *A.G.*

**Details:** At Herbst Theater (401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco) 7 p.m., $25-45.

**Go if:** You prefer laughs to liquor.

**Transportation hassle:** Medium-high (dare the drive or dare the Civic Center BART stop)

**Fanciness quotient:** 3.5/5

**Balloon quotient:** Fulfilled

## New Year's Eve at Pizzaiolo

I once told a friend that if I was forced to live in one restaurant for the rest of my life, I would hands-down choose to live at Pizzaiolo. It's not just because of its perfectly charred crusts and warm yet-far-from-saccharine service; it's also because the people who work there know a thing or two about ambience — which is why I absolutely trust them when it comes to throwing a tasteful (and tasty) New Year's Eve party. For their first ever year-end bash, the folks at Pizzaiolo will be opening their doors at 9 p.m., when guests are invited to mingle in their cleared-out dining space and enjoy passed hors d'oeuvres (including pizza) and a complimentary cocktail. More cocktails can be purchased all night at the bar, and music from the eleven-piece Brooklyn Afro-Cuban band Zongo Junction begins promptly at ten and goes till the bitter end. Guests hankering for something more substantial food-wise are invited to enjoy the four-course prix fixe meal at Boot and Shoe Service for a $15 discount on the Pizzaiolo party ticket. — *A.G.*

**Details:** At Pizzaiolo (5008 Telegraph Ave., Oakland). 9 p.m.–1 a.m., $45.

**Go if:** Your decor of choice involves terrariums.

**Level of intensity while hounding hors d'oeuvres:** Very, very high.

**Hip quotient:** Temescal uber-trendy

**Inebriation:** 4/5

## Nick Waterhouse

Just because 2013 is upon us doesn't mean we have to start busting out our metallic spandex one-pieces and best robot impersonations. The 20th century wasn't *that* long ago. Fellas, slather on the Brylcreem; ladies, leave those curlers in; you can indulge your nostalgia in the vintage, dulcet R&B tones of San Francisco's own Nick Waterhouse, who records his stuff using old-school analog equipment onto tape. He'll be getting a little help from Quinn DeVeaux and the Blue Beat Review, Ben Stolorow Trio, and Gaucho. — *L.C.*

**Details:** At Bimbo's 365 Club (1025 Columbus Ave., San Francisco). 9 p.m., $90.

**Go if:** You're more Little Richard than Lil Wayne.

**What to wear:** Your best cocktail attire.

**Hipster quotient:** 3/5

**Inebriation:** 3/5

**Meat market:** 4/5

## Futuropolis with Star Slinger

What's nice about UK producer *Star Slinger* is 1) his ability to enhance pretty much any genre of music in his remixes, and 2) his elegance in doing so. He has remixed Life Without Buildings just as beautifully as he has Jessie Ware, all while abandoning the compulsion to overkill them with too many beats and too much speed. Futuropolis is a good bet if you feel like dancing and grooving on New Year's Eve, but don't feel like having your head bashed in. As fellow performers Polish Ambassador say of Futuropolis' sets, "the group is not a quick fuck...it's a passionate love-making affair." — *L.C.*

**Details:** At 1015 Folsom (1015 Folsom St., San Francisco). 9 p.m., $30.

**Go if:** You've never said the words "Dance music is dance music."

**What to wear:** Something you'll be able to party in till 9 a.m.

**Hipster quotient:** 4/5

**Inebriation:** 4/5

**Meat market:** 4/5

## Terry Malts

If you're not feeling all the trance-y dance-y stuff this New Year's Eve, there are plenty of other alternatives that are far from a cop-out. San Francisco's Terry Malts wears its influences on its sleeves — everyone from The Replacements to The Ramones to The Beatles to Joy Division, not that you've ever heard all those sounds come together in quite this way. Beneath the distorted guitars and fast punk drumming, its songs are lovely pop numbers in the best tradition of Slumberland's indie pop-rock. See the band perform with *Toys That Kill* and *Pins of Light*. — *L.C.*

**Details:** At Hemlock Tavern (1131 Polk St., San Francisco). 9 p.m., $12.

**Go if:** You once wept while listening to *Let It Be* or *Closer*.

**What to wear:** Don't think too much about it.

**Hipster quotient:** 5/5

**Inebriation:** 4/5

**Meat market:** 3/5

## 1984 · Breakfast of Champions

The best New Year's Eve dance party actually starts at 6 a.m. on New Year's Day and is aptly named Breakfast of Champions. Begin and end the night at Mighty, first at 1984, the long-running Eighties/New Wave party that used to be at Cat Club. 1984's true festivities run until 2 a.m. and include a champagne toast. In between parties, fuel up at one of the city's late-night diners like Grubstake or even the nearby DNA Pizza next to DNA Lounge, then go back to Mighty and grab some headphones for the outdoor silent disco that starts at 6 a.m. Silent Frisco's silent disco — "silent" because participants wear wireless headphones and dance to DJ sets especially mixed for the experience — has become a popular component of music festivals such as Treasure Island and Bonnaroo. Inside, starting at 6 a.m., there'll be funky deep house courtesy of DJs from Burning Man theme camps, including DISTRIKT, Pink Mammoth, and Space Cowboys. An outdoor stage starts bumping at 9 a.m., and four food trucks will be on site to nourish the crowd to keep going until 5 p.m. — *W.P.*

**Details:** At Mighty (119 Utah St., San Francisco). Starts at 9 p.m. (free) and again at 6 a.m. ($25).

**Go if:** You want to dance all night and the next day.

**Beware of:** A cracked-out, sleep-deprived crowd.

**Hipster quotient:** 3.5/5

**Inebriation:** 5/5

**Meat market:** 4/5

## Sunset · Honey Soundsystem

Promoters Sunset Music and Honey Soundsystem have made a name in the local electronic music scene by throwing parties that draw international talent, in particular DJs from Berlin, the techno capital of Europe. Honey Soundsystem will often book small West Coast club tours for the artists who fly in for its weekly Sunday night party at Holy Cow, where DJs spin obscure vintage vinyl into minimal house masterpieces for sweaty men on the prowl. While Sunset Music may bring out the straight contingent, don't be surprised if half-naked boys start making out on the dance floor come midnight. New York City-based producer/DJ wunderkind MANIK headlines along with duo Still Going, which is signed to James Murphy's DFA Records. — *W.P.*

**Details:** At Public Works (161 Erie St., San Francisco). 9 p.m., $20, $25.

**Go if:** You're an electronic music elitist and vinyl import enthusiast.

**What to wear:** A vintage cardigan over booty shorts.

**Hipster quotient:** 4/5

**Inebriation:** 5/5

**Meat market if you're male:** 5/5

**Meat market if you're female:** 0/5 ●

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# NEW YEAR'S EVE & DAY EVENTS

## RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

**The Tenth Annual Prayers From the Heart** Bring your drums and percussion instruments for a night of music and dance. Spirit the new year with spiritual director Spring Washam, Co-Founder of the East Bay Meditation Center. Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m.-1 a.m. $20-50. East Bay Church of Religious Science, 4130 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, (510) 428-1303. ReligiousScience.org.

**Phenomenon 2013: All Access/Non-Stop: the Ceremonial Ceremonial** The 13 Dream Tenders and Healers create a unique ceremonial celebration including [illegible] a "spiritual cabaret" of music, [illegible] rituals, games, chanting, dance, trance, storytelling, drumming, and the "Midnight Magic" finale. Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m.-1 a.m. $35-75. Humanist Hall, 390 27th St., Oakland. 510-451-5818. [illegible].org.

## FAIRS, FESTIVALS, & FIESTAS

**New Year's Eve Party and Celebration with Sue, Betty & Joe** A women's New Years Eve party with [illegible] and a [illegible] bar. Featuring music by Jean Fineberg and The Party Band, and [illegible] Anna and Maria Cava, and dancing all night. Mon., Dec. 31, 8:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m. $135. Mandela Women's Cultural Arts Club, 1021 Mountain Blvd., Oakland. 510-339-1832.

**New Year's Eve Party for the Whole Family** Guests can enjoy Playland games all night. With "quiet rooms" for sleepy young partners and a countdown for each American time zone. Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m.-12:30 a.m. $20-25. Playland-Not-at-the-Beach, 10979 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. PlaylandNotattheBeach.org.

**New Year's Eve Peña Pachamama** Featuring a three-course dinner, champagne, [illegible] music, and a full night of [illegible] and [illegible] dancing. Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m.-1:30 a.m. $89. Peña Pachamama, 1630 Powell St., San Francisco. 415-646-0018. PenaPachamama.com.

**NYE Gala** Featuring an international buffet, [illegible] and a champagne toast. A two-level party with the [illegible] and the [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. [illegible] Restaurant, 2500 Broadway, Oakland. 510-808-4368.

**Oakland, Oakland, New Year's Eve [illegible]** [illegible] featuring live bands and [illegible] Casino-style gaming in the [illegible] lobby. [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 7:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m. $65-85. Marriott [illegible], 1001 Broadway, Oakland. [illegible] Marriott.com.

**Oakland New Year's Eve [illegible] Ball** Featuring dinner, champagne, [illegible] music by the World [illegible] Show, and dancing. Hosted by Dr. Sheila Wells and the honorable [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $85. Oakland Masonic Center, 3903 Broadway, Oakland.

**Pacific Pinball: Oakland NYE 2013** Play pinball, eat snacks, and enjoy a champagne toast at midnight. Kids welcome. Mon., Dec. 31, 7 p.m. $15-30. Pacific Pinball Museum, 1510 Webster St., Alameda. 510-205-1418. PacificPinball.org.

**Save Tigers: A New Year's [illegible] Earthly Event** A New Years Eve [illegible] to support Rainforest [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m.-2 a.m. $5-10. The Vagabond, [illegible] St., Oakland. [illegible]

**Spice Monkey NYE 2013** Featuring a four-course dinner and live music by [illegible] Level Orange. Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m.-12:30 a.m. $60 per person, $85 with wine pairing. Spice Monkey Cafe, 1628 Webster St., Oakland, 510-268-0170. SpiceMonkeyCafe.com

**New Power: NYE [illegible]** Sponsored by [illegible] featuring champagne and [illegible] beer featuring music by Kimel, D. Rock, and The [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $10-$75. Jack London Aquatic Center, 115 Embarcadero, Oakland, 510-238-[illegible] JLAC.org.

**T&T NYE 2013** Featuring DJ [illegible] and [illegible] Shuga, [illegible] champagne toast, raffle, and free gift souvenir. Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $78. Washington Inn, 495 10th St., Oakland. 510-452-1776.

**USS Hornet's New Year's Eve Gala** Featuring three dance floors, free dance lessons by Arthur [illegible] Fred Astaire [illegible] Jim Truesdale, a silent auction, and a view of San Francisco's fireworks from the ship's deck. Food and drink [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 7:30 p.m.-1 a.m. $45-85. USS Hornet Museum, 707 W Hornet Ave., Alameda, 510-521-8448. USS-Hornet.org.

**Rise and [illegible]** On Sunday participate in Sing and Dance in the [illegible] making a communal wreath while listening to music. On Monday watch a play [illegible] "I Survived 2012" [illegible] music jamming session, and enjoy dance and drumming into the new year. Mon., Dec. 30, 8 p.m.-midnight, $20 for Sunday, $70 for Monday, $80 for Max. InterPlace, 2273 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-465-2797. InterPlay.org.

## KIDS

**New Year's Eve Day Party** Fun New Years [illegible] for kids, including crafting, custom noisemakers and a balloon drop. Mon., Dec. 31, 12-2 p.m., free with museum admission. Lawrence Hall of Science, 1 Centennial Dr., Berkeley. 510-642-5132. LawrenceHallofScience.org.

## SPORTS & OUTDOORS-PARTICIPATORY

**Berkeley New Year's Walk** Get off on the right foot in the new year with a communal walk along the high ground of the Berkeley/Kensington [illegible]. The pace will be moderate but there will be many [illegible]. Meet at the southwest corner of Arlington Ave and Coventry Road in Kensington. Tue., Jan. 1, 2 p.m., free.

## CULINARY & WINE

**Celebrate New Year's Eve at Gather in Berkeley** Serving a four-course prix fixe menu with vegan and omnivore options for each course and a wine by the glass pairing available for an additional $25-30. Menu highlights will include [illegible] with [illegible] and oysters; a Chef's [illegible] fish [illegible] and an aged [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 5-10 p.m. $65. Gather, 2200 Oxford St., Berkeley. 510-809-0400. GatherRestaurant.com.

**Celebrate New Year's Eve at [illegible]** Serving the regular a la carte menu plus [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m.-2 a.m. [illegible] 427 Washington St., Oakland. 510-272-[illegible]

**Celebrate New Year's Eve at Lake Chalet at Oakland** A holiday a la carte menu with special entrées including [illegible] with Prosecco Poached [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, [illegible] p.m. Lake Chalet, 1520 Lakeside Dr., Oakland. 510-208-5253. TheLakeChalet.com.

**Celebrate New Year's Eve at [illegible]** Featuring [illegible] as well as a whole night of music by [illegible], an eleven-piece Oakland [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m.-1 a.m. $45. [illegible], 5008 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible]

Erykah Badu performs at the Fox Theater.

[illegible]Oakland.com.

**Sopa New Year's Eve** Four-course menu [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 5-9 p.m. $60 per person, $80 with wine pairing. Sopa, 4283 Piedmont Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible]-3076. [illegible]

**New Year's Eve Argentine [illegible]** A [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 5 p.m. [illegible] Bocanova, 55 Webster St., Oakland. 510-444-1233. Bocanova.com.

**New Year's Eve at Borgo Italia** A [illegible] "Cotechino con lenticchie e Pane" offered [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 5 p.m.-midnight. Borgo Italia, 499 9th St., Oakland. 510-251-[illegible] BorgoItaliaOakland.com.

**NYE at [illegible] Pizzeria** An Italian-inspired four course meal [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 5-7:30 p.m. $60 p.p., plus $30 with wine pairings. [illegible] 1960 [illegible] Avenue, Kensington.

## COMEDY

**Josh [illegible] "[illegible] Baby"** [illegible] one-man show [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 8 & 10 p.m. [illegible] Rhythmix Cultural Works, 2513 Blanding Ave., Alameda. 510-865-5060. Rhythmix.org.

**New Year's Eve Comedy at Farley's East** Farley's last comedy event of the year hosted by [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 7:30-9 p.m., free. Farley's, 33 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-835-[illegible] FarleysCoffee.com.

**New Year's Eve Comedy [illegible] with [illegible]** Featuring [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 7 & 10 p.m. $40-100. [illegible] 14th St., San Leandro. 510-[illegible]

**[illegible] New Year's Eve** A night of stand-up, live music, and [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 7-10 p.m. $25-45. [illegible] San Francisco. 415-[illegible]

**NYE [illegible] Comedy Explosion** Featuring [illegible] Oakland, Earthquake, [illegible] and special guests. Mon., Dec. 31, 10:30 p.m. [illegible] Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland. ParamountTheatre.com.

## BLUES, FOLK, & COUNTRY

**[illegible]** Mon., Dec. 31, 8:30 p.m. $TBA. Cafe Van Kleef, 1621 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-763-7711. CafeVanKleef.com.

**New Year's Eve [illegible]** w/ [illegible] The [illegible] and Lost Dog Found. Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $14. Mystic Theatre, 23 Petaluma Blvd., Petaluma.

**New Year's Eve Bluegrass [illegible]** Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $26.50, $28.50. Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 2020 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-644-2020. TheFreight.org.

**New Year's Eve with John Lee Hooker Jr.** Mon., Dec. 31, 8 & 11 p.m. $50, $80. Biscuits & Blues, 401 Mason St., San Francisco. 415-292-2583. [illegible]

**[illegible] NYE** Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $20. [illegible] 3225 [illegible] St., San Francisco.

**The [illegible] and [illegible] New Year's Eve [illegible]** w/ The Pine Box Boys, [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $10-$15. The Uptown, 1928 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-451-8100. UptownNightclub.com.

**[illegible]** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 8:30 p.m. $10. Cafe du Nord, 2170 Market St., San Francisco. 415-861-5016. CafeDuNord.com.

## DJ & DANCE

**2013 San Francisco NYE International Ball** Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $45-$125. Palace Hotel, 2 New Montgomery St., San Francisco. 415-[illegible]

**[illegible] NYE 2013** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $12. [illegible] Lounge, 2221 Broadway, Oakland. 510-451-4677. [illegible]

**Fabuopolis** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $50. 1015 Folsom Nightclub, 1015 Folsom St., San Francisco. 415-431-1444. 1015.com.

**[illegible]** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $15. [illegible] 181 Eddy St., San Francisco.

**Midnight at [illegible]** Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $50-$250. The Regency Ballroom, 1290 Sutter St., San Francisco. 415-673-5716. TheRegencyBallroom.com.

**New Year's Eve [illegible]** featuring new wave, Eighties, and Indie. Free champagne toast at midnight. Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $10, $15. [illegible] Bar, 2075 16th St., San Francisco.

**New Year's Eve** Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $60-$80. Bench and Bar, 510 17th St., Oakland. 510-444-2266. Bench-and-Bar.com.

**New Year's Eve 2013 at The W Hotel** full premium open bar, three midnight balloon drops, five [illegible] of music: [illegible] Top 40, hip-hop, [illegible] and more. Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $100. W Hotel, 181 3rd St., San Francisco.

**NYE 1300** Free champagne toast at midnight and [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m., free. Mighty, 119 Utah St., San Francisco. 415-762-0151. Mighty119.com.

**NYE 2013 Restaurant Bollywood/Bhangra Party** red carpet entry, midnight champagne toast, open bar, [illegible] complimentary party favors, exclusive VIP goodie bags, go-go dancers, and more. Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $20-$75. Horizon Restaurant & Lounge, 498 Broadway, San Francisco. [illegible]

**NYE 2013 [illegible]** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $TBA. [illegible] Pier 45, Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco.

**NYE 2013 at [illegible]** w/ DJ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $10-$150. [illegible] Washington St., San Francisco.

**NYE at One Warfield feat. [illegible]** Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $40-$100. The Warfield, 982 Market St., San Francisco. 415-775-7722.

**NYE Mezzanine 2013** w/ [illegible] midnight champagne toast, live video mixing, 2 balloon drops, and more. Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $40 and up. Parc 55 Hotel, 55 Cyril Magnin St., San Francisco.

**The Pink Room: NYE 2013** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $80. Phoenix Hotel, 601 Eddy St., San Francisco.

**Regency New Year's Eve 2013** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $58-$85. Mezzanine, 444 Jessie St., San Francisco. 415-625-8880. MezzanineSF.com.

**[illegible] NYE [illegible]** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $50-$120. The New Parish, 579 18th St., Oakland. TheNewParish.com.

**[illegible] NYE 2013** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $25 and up. The Factory, 525 Harrison St., San Francisco.

## HOLIDAY MUSIC

**New Year's Eve at Bimbo's** w/ [illegible] and the Blue Beat Review. Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $60. Bimbo's 365 Club, 1025 Columbus Ave., San Francisco. 415-474-0365. Bimbos365Club.com.

**New Year's Eve with Pete Escovedo & Sheila E Latin Jazz Orchestra** Mon., Dec. 31, 8 & 11 p.m. [illegible] Yoshi's Oakland, 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland. 510-238-9200. Yoshis.com.

**SF Symphony presents a New Year's Eve Masquerade Ball** w/ the San Francisco Symphony and other special guests and performers. Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $85-$295. Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco. 415-864-6000.

## JAZZ, LOUNGE, & CABARET

**Special New Year's Eve [illegible]** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $10. Jupiter, 2181 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-8277. JupiterBeer.com.

**New Year's Eve Party** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $50. [illegible] Street Gallery, 5781 [illegible] Ave., Oakland.

**[illegible]** [illegible] jazz with guest [illegible] singers. Tuesdays-Saturdays, 9 p.m., free. The Alley, 3325 Grand Ave., Oakland.

510-444-8085.

## ROCK & POP

**[illegible]** w/ a balloon drop and champagne toast at midnight. Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $50. Great American Music Hall, 859 O'Farrell St., San Francisco. 415-885-0750. MusicHallSF.com.

**Forbidden Island NYE [illegible]** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $75. Forbidden Island, 1304 Lincoln Ave., Alameda. 510-749-0332. ForbiddenIsland-Alameda.com.

**[illegible]** w/ Sonny & The Sunsets, [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 8:30 p.m. $25-$30. The Chapel, 777 Valencia St., San Francisco.

**New Year's Eve [illegible]** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $32. [illegible] 1821 Polk St., San Francisco. [illegible]

**POPNYE** Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $60-$110. Oracle Arena, 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland. [illegible]

**[illegible] New Year's Eve 2013** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $78-$145. Concourse Exhibition Center, 635 8th St., San Francisco. [illegible]

**[illegible]** Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. [illegible] The Regency Ballroom, 1290 Sutter St., San Francisco. 415-673-5716. TheRegencyBallroom.com.

## SOUL, FUNK, R&B, & HIP-HOP

**[illegible] Party** featuring [illegible] Eric McFadden, and other special New Year's guests. Tue., Jan. 1, 8 p.m. [illegible] Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 1710 Mission St., San Francisco. [illegible] BrickAndMortarMusic.com.

**Erykah Badu** w/ The Coup. Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $50.50-$75. Fox Theater, 1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. TheFoxOakland.com.

**[illegible] Parker's Funky New Year's Party** Mon., Dec. 31, 8:30 p.m. [illegible] Yoshi's San Francisco, 1330 Fillmore St., San Francisco. 415-655-5600. Yoshis.com.

**New Year's Eve Dynamite Soul [illegible]** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9:30 p.m. $20, $25. Bottom of the Hill, 1233 17th St., San Francisco. 415-621-4455. BottomoftheHill.com.

**New Year's Eve [illegible] Party** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. [illegible] Three Fifty-Five, 355 19th St., Oakland. 510-451-3355. 355Bar.com.

**Oakland New Year's Eve [illegible]** w/ [illegible] by Dr. Sheila [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 8:30 p.m. [illegible] Oakland Marriott City Center, 1001 Broadway, Oakland.

## WORLD, LATIN, & REGGAE

**[illegible] New Year's Eve [illegible]** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9 p.m., $25 (includes champagne toast). [illegible] 1317 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-525-5054. Ashkenaz.com.

**[illegible] New Year's Eve 2013** w/ [illegible] a 12-piece Salsa [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $30-$50. [illegible] Event Center, 411 California Ave., Treasure Island.

**New Year's Eve [illegible]** w/ [illegible] Mon., Dec. 31, 9:30 p.m. $20, $30. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568. LaPena.org.

# ARTS & CULTURE

# EVENTS & ATTRACTIONS

## Everett's Toys

One doggedly hunts down toys for kids.

Every year Mary Everett hosts a giant birthday bash with a single special request. "I say, plain and simple, bring me toys." As testament to Everett's popularity in this town, the toys pile up to around 200 model trains, dolls, Lego sets, and droids, but her request has nothing to do with an affinity for brightly colored plastic. For the last twenty years, Everett and her family's barbeque franchise, Everett and Jones, have hosted one of Oakland's biggest holiday toy drives.

Siblings George and Mary Everett.

It started when Everett's mother, Dorothy Turner Everett, started collecting toys at the family's local church, Abyssinian Missionary Baptist in Oakland. "Dorothy started it all," said Everett. "She'd pass out toys and feed the homeless — and she was a mother of nine!"

Turner had opened Everett and Jones a decade earlier in 1973, as a single mother raising nine kids on welfare. Starting a new business on her own was a daring endeavor, to say the least, but "she always said that she wanted her children to be able to eat," said Everett. "I guess opening a restaurant was her way of never having to worry about her kids having food."

The original East Oakland restaurant took off, quickly expanding to a Berkeley location at University and San Pablo avenues and another Oakland spot on Fruitvale Avenue within the next two years. In 1995, the flagship Jack London Square location opened. The whole family stayed involved in the business (the name Jones came from Dorothy's one married daughter, who had become a Jones), and Mary eventually took over the Berkeley location. And she's been the dogged champion of the toy drive for the last twelve years.

Everett uses her unique position as a community fixture to unabashedly source toys from just about everyone. In addition to the toy barrel in front of her Berkeley restaurant, Everett collects toys from her local gym, Kelly's; solicits donations from the 99 Cent Store and the Grocery Outlet; and reaches out to friends like CC Sabathia, a pitcher for the Yankees. "They see me in December and they know I'm coming begging!" said Everett. "This is my community; I've gotta do this here."

As far as delivering the toys to kids in the community, that's largely Everett's doing as well. "Some of my customers deal with social services, some of them deal with shelters, so they get the word out for people to come. Then the communities that I'm in — I know a lot of the people that live in this community that are less fortunate, and I pass out fliers for them to come and get some toys for their kids." At last year's event, Everett handed out more than 600 presents, all of which were individually wrapped by Everett and some of her best girl friends.

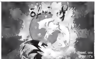
Join Everett at this year's holiday toy drive, on Saturday, December 22 at Everett and Jones (1955 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley), when gifts will be distributed to families in need and on-site wrapping will allow for last-minute donations. Bring your kids to visit with Santa or bring toys to share, but beware the one gift that Everett will never accept: bicycles. "If 600 kids can't have no bikes," she said sternly, "then I don't want no bikes." 1 p.m., free. 510-548-8261 or EverettandJones.com

— *Azeen Ghorayshi*

# PICKS

## The Holiday Classic

Seventeen years ago, Matt Williams began organizing all-star football games featuring the best high-school seniors from various corners of the Bay Area, Sacramento region, and Central Valley because, well, why not. "There's a natural rivalry to see which county plays the best football — it's a given," said Williams. So began The Holiday Classic, a veritable who's-who of blossoming football talent. Previous games have involved Stockton, Modesto, Merced, Sacramento, and East Bay elite; this year's Classic, however, pits the East Bay against the East Bay. On Saturday, Dec. 22, at Pittsburg High (1750 Harbor St., Pittsburg), about forty of the best football players from Alameda County will face off against their brethren from Contra Costa County. Watch the talent collide, 1 p.m. $10 for adults, $5 for youth, free for kids five and under. 408-571-6470 — *Azeen Ghorayshi*



Behold, the MADE's "Games You Can Frame."

## MADE Anniversary and Holiday Party

From the [illegible] Museum in Georgia to the International Museum of Toilets in New Delhi, there are some wacky newcomers being part of the cultural institutions of the world. But the Museum of Art and Digital Entertainment (612 16th St., Oakland) — essentially a museum for video games — strives for more than just novelty status: It's got an ambitious fifteen-year plan to become the SFMOMA of digital art. In the meantime, the museum will celebrate its one-year birthday with a joint anniversary and holiday party on *Saturday, Dec. 22*. That means all-you-can-drink Guinness, pizza, special holiday video games, and a preview of the MADE's new exhibit, "Games You Can Frame," focusing on visual artistry in video games. And, as per its mission, all games are free for playing. 6 p.m. to midnight, $35 or two for $65. 510-788-[illegible] or TheMADE.org. — A.G.

## ATTRACTIONS

**[illegible] Fountain** Enjoy snow flurries every [illegible] shooting 15 feet into the air from above [illegible] life-sized snowman [illegible] throughout the Square. Through Dec. 30, 5-9 p.m., free. Jack London Square, Broadway, Oakland.

**Walnut Creek on Ice** Check IceSkateWalnutCreek.com for the full holiday ice skating schedule: Mondays-Thursdays, 12-9 p.m.; Fridays, 12-11 p.m.; Saturdays, 11 a.m.-11 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Continues through Jan. 13. $14-$15. Holiday Ice Rink at Civic Park, 1375 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-935-7500. IceSkateWalnutCreek.com.

## FAIRS, FESTIVALS, & FIESTAS

**Christmas Day [illegible] Ritual Party** [illegible] street party featuring music, dancing, and games. Tue. Dec. 25, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., free. Saul's Restaurant and Delicatessen, 1475 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-848-3354. SaulsDeli.com.

**¡[illegible], Come, y Bebe!** A casual dinner party with food and music from 6-7pm provided by [illegible] Spanish [illegible] by a screening of *[illegible]* at 7[illegible]. Wed. Dec. 26, 6-9 p.m. $10. Linden Street Brewery, 95 Linden St., Oakland. 510-812-1284. LindenStreet.com.

**Great Dickens Christmas Fair** An immersive Victorian Christmas event, featuring [illegible] three acres of old world English Christmas decorations and more than 700 [illegible] players. Saturdays-Sundays. Continues through Dec. 23. $25 general, $12 kids. Cow Palace, Geneva Ave., San Francisco. 415-404-4111. CowPalace.com.

**Holidays on Lakeshore Boulevard** Enjoy horse-drawn carriage rides and face painting as Christmas and other holiday decorations and refreshments for attendees. Santa will be on hand with candy canes on both days. Meet on Lakeshore Ave. between LakePark and [illegible]. Fri. Dec. 21, 5-7 p.m.; Sat. Dec. 22, 3-8 p.m., free.

**The MADE 1-Year Anniversary and Holiday Party** Join the Museum of Art and Digital Entertainment for a night of all-you-can-drink Guinness, pizza, and games. Plus, view their upcoming exhibit, "Games You Can Frame," which focuses on visual artistry in video games. Sat., Dec. 22, 6 p.m.-midnight, $35, or $65 for two. The Museum of Art and Digital Entertainment, 612 16th St., Oakland. TheMADE.org.

**A Ritual Celebrating the Mayan Calendar** Led by [illegible]. Thu. Dec. 20, 6:30 p.m. $20. John F. Kennedy University Arts and Consciousness Gallery, 2956 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-649-0499. JFKU.edu/Gallery.

## HEALTH, WELLNESS, & SEXUALITY

**Midweek [illegible] & Vibe Away!** Come learn more about quality Vibrators and get [illegible] by [illegible], founder of [illegible] HardWear. Two winners will take home free Vibrators. Thu. Dec. 20, 3-7 p.m., free. Good Vibrations, 2504 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-8987. GoodVibes.com.

## KIDS

**Fairy Winterland** Fairy Winterland celebrates the winter traditions of many cultures — Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, Las Posadas, Diwali, and Chinese New Year — with themed crafts, a festival of lights, and a visit from Santa. Through Dec. 23, 12-7 p.m., $8. Children's Fairyland, 699 Bellevue Ave. (at Lake Merritt), Oakland. 510-452-2259. Fairyland.org.

**Gingerbread Party** Families will work together to decorate an enormous gingerbread house with sweets donated by Habitot. The gingerbread house will be donated to a local homeless shelter for families. Sat. Dec. 22, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., free. Habitot Children's Museum, 2065 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-647-1111. Habitot.org.

**Oakland Zoo's ZooLights** Highlights include a candy cane lane, [illegible], a night-time adventure on the Outback Express train, [illegible] on the Children's Zoo, a light show, and dinner with Santa. Closed Dec. 24 and 25. Through Dec. 31, 5:30-9 p.m., $8. Oakland Zoo, 9777 Golf Links Rd., Oakland. 510-632-9525. OaklandZoo.org.

**Tick Tick Tick... Begin the Annual** Chabot celebrates the end of the Maya calendar cycle and start of a new [illegible]. Sat. Dec. 22, 11 a.m. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

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or m.EastBayExpress.com

## PETS

**East Bay SPCA's Home for the Holidays** Waiving adoption fees on all animals with holiday-themed names. Wednesdays-Sundays. Continues through Dec. 30. free. East Bay SPCA Oakland Adoption Center, 8323 Baldwin St., Oakland. 510-569-0702. EastBaySPCA.org.

## RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** A candlelight service with carols, anthems, scripture lessons, and [illegible] music. The service will be followed by Christmas treats, hot apple cider, and fellowship time. Mon. Dec. 24, 7 p.m., free. Skyline Community Church, 12540 Skyline Blvd., Oakland.

**Family Friendly Christmas Service** A worship service of [illegible] where anthems, [illegible] is slated to take place in the Christmas pageant. Wear your favorite costume: [illegible], sheep, king, queen, angel and [illegible]. Sun. Dec. 23, 10-11 a.m., free. Skyline Community Church, 12540 Skyline Blvd., Oakland.

**International Nativity Exhibit** Features selected nativities from the collection of Judy Davis. Through Jan. 6, 2013, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., free. The Cathedral of Christ the Light, 2121 Harrison St., Oakland. 510-271-1930. CTLCathedral.org.

**Winter Solstice Ceremony** A ritual celebration of the winter solstice. Fri. Dec. 21, 7:30 p.m. $3. Hillside Community Church, 1422 Navellier St., El Cerrito. 510-236-3046.

## SALES, SWAPS, PROMOTIONS, & FUNDRAISERS

**2012 [illegible] Toy Drive** Toys that have been donated as part of the toy drive will be passed out to more than 500 kids. Mayor Jean Quan will be onsite to help distribute the toys, and [illegible] will provide food. Sat. Dec. 22, 1-3 p.m., free. [illegible] One Community Center, [illegible] St., Oakland.

**42nd Annual Berkeley Potters Guild Holiday Show and Sale** Their 42nd Annual Holiday Sale, offering a ceramic exhibition, under the theme "Show Your Stripes." Through Dec. [illegible], 10-5 p.m., free. Berkeley Potters Guild, 731 Jones St., Berkeley. 510-524-7338. BerkeleyPotters.com.

**(Affordable) Art From The Heart** Featuring new or recent work from all of the artists currently working at NIAD Art Center, all priced from $15-$150. Opening reception [illegible] from 2-5pm, featuring a live jazz [illegible] workshop. Through Dec. 28, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., free. NIAD Art Center, 551 23rd St., Richmond. 510-620-0290. NIADArt.org.

**Art is a Gift: A [illegible] Holiday Art Show** A [illegible] showcase of small and affordable original works and prints by Bay Area artists. Featuring Kelly Inouye, Mary Anne Kluth, Leon Wolf, Cara Lam, Kara Nelson, Alison Cove, Keith [illegible], [illegible], Dana [illegible], and Teena Park. Wednesdays-Sundays, 1-6 p.m. Continues through Dec. 23. free. Interface Gallery, 486 49th St., Oakland. InterfaceArtGallery.com.

**Berkeley Farmers' Annual Holiday Crafts Fair** Featuring handmade gifts by local [illegible] and live music. Sat. Dec. 22, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., free. Berkeley Farmers' Market, Derby St., Berkeley. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org.

**Everett and Jones Toy Drive** A toy drive for kids up to age 10. Sat. Dec. 22, 1 p.m., free. Everett & Jones Barbeque, 1955 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-8261. EverettandJones.com.

**The Holiday A.R.T. Salon Exhibit** Featuring works by more than 85 Bay Area artists for this holiday season. Wednesdays-Fridays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturdays, 1-4 p.m. Continues through Dec. 29. free. [illegible] Gallery, 476 14th St., Oakland. 510-465-8928. JoyceGordonGallery.com.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

**Holiday Caroling on Lake Merritt** Enjoy hot cider and cookies before beginning a caroling trek around Lake Merritt. Song sheets provided. Fridays, 4-8 p.m.; Saturdays, 3-8 p.m. Thu. Dec. 20, 4-8 p.m. Continues through Dec. 30. $5. Lake Merritt Holiday Center, 568 Bellevue Ave., Oakland. 510-238-2196. OaklandNet.com/Parks/Programs/Boating.asp.

## SPORTS & OUTDOORS-PARTICIPATORY

**[illegible] Hike** Welcome the new calendar cycle with a Sunrise Hike. Hike through the redwoods on a moderately strenuous 4-5 mile hike. Hike will take place rain or shine. Meet at the Center @ 7:00am. Sat. Dec. 22, 6:15 a.m. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

## SPORTS-SPECTATOR

**Golden State Warriors vs. Charlotte [illegible]** As part of Oakland Public Schools Night, $5 of each ticket goes to benefit Oakland's [illegible]. Fri. Dec. 21, 7:30 p.m. $30. Oracle Arena, 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland. 510-569-2121. Coliseum.com.

**The Holiday Classic** An all-star football game, pitting Alameda County vs. Contra Costa County varsity players. Sat. Dec. 22, 1 p.m. $10. Pittsburg High School, 1750 Harbor St., Pittsburg. 925-473-2390. [illegible]

*Submissions for calendar listings should be e-mailed to Calendar@EastBayExpress.com or mailed to Calendar Editor, East Bay Express, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA 94607. Deadline is 14 days prior to event date.*

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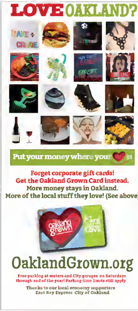

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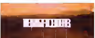
# MUSEUMS & GALLERIES



Levente Sulyok's *The Strength to Be There*

## Pregnant Silences

### Levente Sulyok weaves Spaghetti Westerns and corporate slogans into an aesthetically cohesive exhibition

A vinyl record turning silently in reverse is a good place to start: in any case, the gesture is too overtly poetic to ignore. Coming around the deck and entering the back exhibition space of Mariana )( Johnston, the West Berkeley home-cum-gallery, this is just what one finds: a sensor-activated turntable, poised to start spinning Ennio Morricone's soundtrack to the Clint Eastwood classic *A Fistful of Dollars* with the approach of a viewer. The mind responsible for this peculiarly quiet, though by no means mute, scenario is Levente Sulyok, a Hungary-born artist and UC Berkeley MFA graduate currently based in Wichita, Kansas.

Sulyok lays as the philosophical context of his work "the phenomenon when human desire, driven by various cultural ideals, is projected outward, then immediately re-produced, packaged and finally consumed by its very source as something it lacks." What better example of this phenomenon than an Italian-directed and -scored film, shot in Spain, that just so happens to be one of the finest depictions of the American West in the genre's history? A record running in reverse, indeed.

Such voluble silences, compressions, excisions, and about-faces pervade *All the Paranoid Monoliths* — an aesthetically cohesive exhibition if ever there was one. Accompanying the Spaghetti Western record is a dust jacket riddled with voids. Sulyok has censored the eyes of the actors with black bands and excised dozens of key descriptors with white-out strips — one of the artist's preferred tools. "The Man with No Name ( ) arrives in ( ) unshaven, unwelcome," reads a modified caption beneath the movie's star.

Nearby hangs a large advertisement frame with no advertisement in it, its fluorescent backlights and exposed wiring becoming a sort of blinding content in itself.

True to Sulyok's distinctively Frankfurt School-inflected philosophical statement, the crux of *All the Paranoid Monoliths* — the title of which comes from a book by anarchist essayist Hakim Bey — is political, at least as much as the artist's oblique approach allows.

In the main gallery the viewer will find three large paintings of vibrant but loosely washed acrylic, depicting landscapes again reminiscent of the American West. Superimposed upon these scenes are chains of white, blocky letterforms that appear to have collapsed onto themselves. In fact, they spell *Where Vision Gets Built*, *The Strength to Be There*, and *The Power of Yes* — the respective corporate slogans of Lehman Brothers, AIG, and Washington Mutual, three financial institutions culpable for and destroyed by the recent economic crisis.

In piling the letters of these phrases (crypto-fascist poetry, as the exhibition statement eloquently puts it) on top of one another, Sulyok renders them as sturdy as they are illegible. The paintings, together with a sealed shipping box containing Amazon-bought copies of *The Communist Manifesto* and a scrolling LED text display turned toward the wall, amount to a whole roomful of records, all spinning silently in reverse.

*All the Paranoid Monoliths* runs through December 30 at Mariana )( Johnston Gallery (1201 Sixth St., 2nd Fl., Berkeley). 510-558-0993 or MarianaJohnston.org.

— *Alex Bigman*

## ART GALLERIES

**Addison/Ultima Window, Val Redux:** A site-specific exhibit featuring mixed media works mapping the artist's physical locations and psychological and emotional spaces. Through Jan. 14, 2013. 2180 Milvia St., Berkeley. Kala.org.

**Amaia Gallery: "Modify [illegible] Repaired and Repurposed":** Paying tribute to the artistry and creativity shown by mending, as well as to the beauty of the imperfection. Mondays-Fridays, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Continues through Feb. 28. free. 2800 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-849-4840. AmeliaGallery.com.

**Bancroft Library: Fiat Lux Redux: Ansel Adams and Clark Kerr:** Featuring original Ansel Adams prints of ninety-nine images of the University of California System in the 1960s. Mondays-Fridays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Continues through Feb. 21. free. **"40 Years of Title IX":** A celebration of 40 Years of Title IX with objects, audio clips and personal material from The Bancroft Library. Mondays-Fridays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Continues through Dec. 21. free. UC Berkeley, Berkeley. Bancroft.Berkeley.edu.

**Berkeley Art Center: [illegible]:** The center's annual exhibition of its members' work. Through Jan. 13, 2013. free. **WONDER: 2012 [illegible]:** Highlights the wide range of work from Berkeley Art Center's extended group of small members'. Wednesdays-Sundays, 12-5 p.m. Continues through Jan. 27. free. 1275 Walnut St. (in Live Oak Park), Berkeley. 510-644-6893. BerkeleyArtCenter.org.

**Berkeley Public Library, Central Branch: The Art of Fumiye Yoshikawa:** Bay Area artist Fumiye Yoshikawa exhibits sumi-e and [illegible] traditional Japanese paintings. Artist's reception on Sunday, Nov. 11th, at 2:00 pm. Check online for library hours. Through Jan. 3, 2013. free. 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-981-6100. BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org.

**Black Repertory Theater: [illegible]:** Murder Banwell in Spa. A night of mystery theater. Dinner is included in the price of [illegible] tickets [illegible] Saturdays, 3 & 8 p.m., Fri., Dec. 21, 8 p.m., Sun., Dec. 23, 5 p.m. Continues through Dec. 22. $25-$35. 3201 Adeline St., Berkeley. 510-652-2120.

**Bullseye Images: This Images Side:** Exploration of the human form in kilnformed glass. Tuesdays-Fridays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Continues through Jan. 12. free. 4514 Hollis St., Emeryville. 510-595-1318. BullseyeGlass.com.

**Chandra Cerrito Contemporary: "Immaterial":** Featuring the work of Amy M. Ho and Cathy Cunningham-Little, using light as a primary medium to challenge ideas of perception. Thursdays-Saturdays, 12-6 p.m. Continues through Jan. 24. free. 480 23rd St., Oakland. 510-260-7494. ChandraCerrito.com.

**Creative Growth Art Center: FLICK:** Exhibition opening party Dec. 7 featuring live music and food trucks. Holiday art sale featuring the work of over one hundred artists, inspired by cult classics and the bright lights of Hollywood. Saturdays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Continues through Dec. 22. free. 355 24th St., Oakland. 510-836-2340. CreativeGrowth.org.

**David Brower Center: Brower California:** With illustrations, sketches, and murals by Laura Cunningham, exploring what California was like centuries ago. Through Jan. 30, 2013. 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-809-0900. BrowerCenter.org.

**Doe Library: David Brower: A Force for Nature:** An exhibit honoring the founder of the modern environmental movement. Mondays-Fridays, Sundays, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Continues through Mar. 31. free. UC Berkeley campus, Berkeley. 510-643-0130.

**Expressions Gallery: "Celebration, Renewal, & Joy":** With art exploring themes of celebration and joy in light of the New Year. Featuring pieces by internationally-renowned artists and 85-year old cancer survivor Josh Weinstein. Wednesdays-Saturdays, 12-6 p.m., Sundays, 12-5 p.m. Continues through Jan. 31. free. 2035 Ashby Ave., Berkeley. 510-644-4930. ExpressionsGallery.org.

**[illegible] Art Gallery: [illegible] Prize, Christopher Ellington & Christopher Kanyusik:** Art opening and end of the world costume party. Enjoy absinthe tea and music by DJ Champagne Fri., Dec. 21, 6-9 p.m. free. 1098 [illegible] Pl., Oakland. 510-[illegible]. [illegible]

**[illegible] Gallery: The Images of the Sea:** Through Dec. 29. free. 492 23rd St., Oakland. 510-[illegible]. [illegible]Gallery.org.

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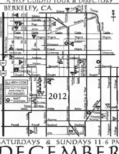

SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS 11-6 PM

# DECEMBER

NOV 24-25, DEC. 1-2, 8-9, 15-16 (22-24✓*)

1 R. Strong Glass 525-3150 WB
1235 4th St. @ Gilman
www.rstrong.com
*Randy Strong & Susan Fores art glass*

2 Shibumi Gallery 528-7736 WB✓
1402 5th St. @ Camelia
shibumigallery.com
(open 12 to 6 p.m.)
*jewelry, clothing & sculpture featuring April Higashi, Ociele & Eric Powell*

4 Brushstrokes Studio 526-1360 WB✓
745 Page St. @ 4th
www.brushstrokesstudio.com
*pottery & mosaics created by you*

4 Berkeley Potters Guild 524-7031 WB✓
731 Jones St. @ 4th
berkeleypotters.com
(open all 5 p.m.)
*largest Bay Area potters group fun, functional & sculptural ceramics created by 20 artisans*

5 Stained Glass Garden Inc. 84 -4336 WB✓
1800 4th St. @ Delaware
stainedglassgarden.com
*50 artists unique glass gifts & tools classes mosaic/fusing/stained glass*

4 4th Street Studio WB✓
2000 4th St. @ University
www.fourthstreetstudio.com
*new space, 9 artists show prints, paintings & craft come Fridays to watch us work*

2 Libaire Leather 843-9177 WB✓
2100 5th St. @ Addison
www.libaire.net
*leather bags handmade in Berkeley*

8 Urbano Cellars 647-8053 W ✓
2323 B 4th St. @ Channing
urbanocellars.com
*Winery–wine tasting & sales*

4 Marion Coleman 528-4078 B✓
916 Virginia St. @ 8th
dancingcolorceramics.etsy.com
*colorful ceramics/cards/raised candle*

11 Susan McAllister 525-4375 ✓
1415 Stannage Ave. @ Page
*watercolor pencil portraits, lessons*

12 Shoey Sindel 917-0659 WB✓
1607 Solano Ave. @ Thornton
shoeysindel.com
*fine art portraits event photography*

12 Thousand Oaks Art Gallery 528-3661 WB✓
886 Colusa Ave. @ Solano
thousandoaksartgallery.com
*photography/jewelry/glass/pottery wood/sculpture/photo classes/gifts*

12 Berkeley Rustic Birdhouses 827-5414 WB✓
1733 Sacramento St. @ Francisco
www.berkeleyrusticbirdhouses.com
*birdhouses/feeders/bathhouses/garden art*

14 Jerome Carlin 549-9435 WB
Strawberry Creek Design Center
1250 Addison St. #1 4 @ Russell
www.jeromecarlin.com
(open Nov. 24-25, Dec. 1-2 only)
*luminous figures & rich landscapes*

14 Gary Turchin 220-0259 B✓
2100 McKinley Ave. @ Addison
www.garyturchin.net
(open Nov. 25, Dec. 2, 9, 16 #14)
*art that inspires, books with poems*

12 Lewis Suzuki 849-1437 W
2240 Grant St. @ Bancroft
(open Nov. 24-25, Dec. 1-16)
*92 years old and still painting*

12 Margaret Norman 848-8138
2332 Grant St. @ Bancroft (in back)
(closed Nov. 24-25)
*solar electric & wood fired pottery*

note: In buildings with one address the studio/suite # is near the name
W = wheelchair accessible
B = open more days during the event & through the end of the year call studio for more info
✓ = open December 22-24 call artist for hours & dates
A = website only or by appointment only
510 Area Code unless otherwise noted

18 Holly Wally Lighting 84 -1565 WB✓
1641 Dwight Way @ McGee
hollywally.com
*lighting/shades/candles/assemblages*

18 The Woodworks 843-84 5 W
2551 San Pablo Ave. @ Blake
berkeleywoodworks.com
*handcrafted furniture & gifts*

20 Meagan Moore 353-0800 B✓
2309 Russell St. @ Telegraph
www.meaganmoore.com
*charming ink drawings on antique paper*

21 Expressions Gallery 644-4930 WB✓
2035 Ashby Ave. @ Adeline
expressionsgallery.org
(closed Nov. 24-25) (open Sats.13 5, Suns. 12-5)
*art/jewelry/fiber/glass/poetry/events & classes Pop-up roaming–check website*

17 Carol Lee Shanks 548-5979 B
3102 Wheeler St. @ Prince
www.carolleeshanks.com
(open only Nov. 24-25 & Dec. 1-2, 11-6 p.m.)
*designer made clothing & textile art*

23 Loretta Warner 597 995 B✓
3168 College Ave. #201 @ Alcatraz
www.lorettawarner.com
*knitwear couture & textile paintings*

24 Sawtooth Building
930 Dwight Way @ 8th
- Marlene Walters #5 6 2-0 80 WB✓
marlenew.com
*oil paintings/giclees/silver jewelry*
- Chris Peterson # A 848-2049 ✓
www.petersonland.com
*scenic paintings/prints/rock pottery*

25 Sawtooth Building continues
2525 8th Street @ Dwight
- Textile Dream Studio #11C (new location)
textiledreamstudio.com 845-0908 W
*"15 Artists–Holiday Gift Sale scarves, jewelry, dolls, art quilts, gift certificates for upcoming classes*

26 Sawtooth Building continues
2547 8th Street @ Dwight
- Michael Sasin # 7 (inside) WB✓
michaelsasin.com 649-8953
*hand blown glass by Michael Sasin*
- Bob Pool Pottery #15 599-7720 WB✓
bobpoolpottery.com
*stoneware pots for the table*
- Janet Lee Smith #34 B 665-1665 W
*floor/cloths/furniture/painting/classes*

Sawtooth Building continues
- Maggie Wiersyk #24 B 527-1590 WB✓
maggiewiersyk.blogspot.com
*bead jewelry/tatting & collectibles*
- Miriam Abramowitsch #36 B W ✓
www.miriamabra.com 684-0832
*hand felted scarves*
- Susan Brooks #24 A 845-2613 WB✓
www.susanbrooks.com
*intricate jewelry & figurative artwork*
- Fuff Tabachnikoff #30 A 220-1510 WB✓
www.fuff.net (new location)
*unique glass art, jewelry & mosaics*
- This Into That/Jim Brooks #30 WB✓
thisintothat.com 845-5 06
*thematic furniture from vintage books*
- Sharon Dugary #36 843-3240 WB✓
www.sherondugary.com
*oil pastel/art quilts/workshops*
- Nicole Thorsen #31B 847-0496
nicolethorsen.com
(Saturdays only, or by appointment)
*art*
- Curtis H. Salma #31 B 305-5694 WB
www.curtisharma.com
*jewelry/sculpture/custom rings*
- Mary K. Shisler #3 499-6330 WB✓
maryshisler.com
*pigment prints/jewelry/reparagons*
- cLOVEr Designs #31 541-3831 WB✓
clover-designs.com
*repurposed textiles/home décor*
- Gina Papen #3 WB✓
ginapapen.com 220-3698
*fine arts/painting/collage/jewelry*
- Christine Rossi Art #31 52 -8383 W ✓
www.christinerossiart.com
*surreal paintings & small works*
- Anne Shaienberger 885-1964 WB✓
anneshaienstudio.com #31
*jewelry/ceramic orthos/future*
- Julies Maxi #30 309-7673 WB✓
www.maxi-shifted.com (new location)
*works on paper abstract to realism*
- Culture Consumer #30 472-3976
www.cultureconsumer.com
*prints on paper & apparel*
- Erin McGuiness #31 (inside) W
erinmcguiness.com 385-6346
(open Dec. 15-16 only)
*sculptural ceramic vessels*
- Salma Arastu #34 (inside) WB✓
www.salmaarastu.com 868-4398
*spiritual figurative paintings*

27 Sawtooth Building continues
2599 8th St. @ Parker
- Barbini #4 847-2086 W
www.barbini.net
*contemporary timeless jewelry*
- Alison B. Antelman #45 704-1906 WB✓
www.antelman.com
*jewelry gold/silver unusual stones*

28 Sawtooth Building continues
927 Parker St. @ 8th
- RAE DUNN workshop (new location)
raedunn.com 415-515-9062 W
*utilitarian clay + mixed media*

28 Sawtooth Building continues
913 Parker St. @ 8th
- Diane Abt #46 599-4346
www.dianeabt.com
(open Dec. 1-2, 8-9 only)
*painting/ink drawing/asian calligraphy*

30 Active Space
2703 7th St. @ Carleton
- Sarah Rees Designs #38 502 1493 WB
www.sarahreesdesigns.com
*silver/gold jewelry*
- Hadley Williams #241 612-1207 W
www.hadleywilliams.com
*2D abstraction with unusual materials*

31 Bruno Kark Ceramics 823-6940 WB✓
5515 Doyle St. # 4 @ Powell, Emeryville
brunokark.com
*wheel thrown pottery/vases/planters*

32 Thei Studios 866-558-4865 WB✓
950 57th St. @ Lowell, Emeryville
theistudios.com (enter on Lowell)
*fused glass/functional & sculptural*

4 Chris Wahlberg Photography
wahlbergphoto.com 433-2 27
(by appointment only)
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**FM Gallery** ◎
483 25th Street

**Krowswork Gallery** ◎
480 23rd Street

**Mouna Gallery** ◎
473 25th Street

**Mercury 20** ◎
475 25th Street

**Ochopolis / The Moon** ◎
447 25th Street

**PHOTO** ◎
473 25th Street

**SLATE Contemporary** ◎
473 25th Street

**Roscoe Ceramic Gallery** ◎
473 25th Street

**Shadravan's Art Gallery** ◎
2435 Telegraph Avenue

**Studio Quercus** ◎
385 26th Street

**Vessel Gallery** ◎
471 25th Street

**The Well Gallery** ◎
473 25th Street

**Warehouse 416** ◎
416 26th Street

**Farley's East** ⊛
33 Grand Avenue

**Classic Cars West** ⊛
411 26th Street

**Telegraph** ⊛
2318 Telegraph Avenue

UPTOWN SOUTH OF GRAND & DOWNTOWN

**Awaken Cafe** ⊛
1429 Broadway

**Betti Ono Gallery** ◎
1427 Broadway

**Pro Arts** ◎
150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza

**Oaklandish** ⊛
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**Marion & Rose's Workshop** ⊛
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**Urban Legend Cellars** ⊛
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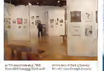
# PICKS



## Wonder

In an art climate heavily defined by the reign of the curator, an exhibition such as *Wonder*, Berkeley Art Center's annual open call, truly is a relaxing experience. Visitors, relieved of the grasping impression which has become synonymous with art viewing, meander casually amidst the show's 204 works, which are hung salon-style. Of course, there is a trade-off with a non-juried exhibition of this size: Pieces that otherwise might have shone are bound to become lost in the pile. Well, so it goes. Take in what you can and zero in when something calls to you. Here's some of what I liked: Bonnie Neumann's stitch-like depiction of the water's surface in "Crosscurrents #1," Nell Rosenblit's austere black-and-white photograph "Leashing," with De Stambler, Nell Haddell's romantic "Self Portrait," and Jenny Olson Kohl's evocative abstraction of the I-5 freeway. *Wonder* runs through January 27 at Berkeley Art Center (1275 Walnut St., Berkeley), 510-644-6893 or BerkeleyArtCenter.org. — *Alex Bigman*

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**Headquarters Gallery. Memorabilia [illegible]** Through Dec. 29. 2200 [illegible] Ave., Berkeley.

**Interface Gallery. Art is a Gift** This benefit for the gallery features small and affordable works by local artists. Opening reception on Saturday, Dec. 8, 6-9 p.m. Through Dec. 22. 486 49th St., Oakland, InterfaceArtGallery.com.

**Johansson Projects. Rachel Kaye and Casey Watson** Featuring the works of Rachel Kaye in "SHEBAM! POW! BLOP! WIZZ!" and Casey Watson in "Dust Bust." Saturdays, 1-5 p.m.; Thursdays, Fridays, 12-6 p.m. Continues through Jan. 31. free. 2300 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-444-9140. JohanssonProjects.com.

**Kala Art Institute Gallery. Fresh Work** Kala's annual presentation of fresh work features over one hundred members of Kala's artistic community including Gallery artists-in-residence, instructors, and staff. Through Feb. 1, 2013. 2990 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-7000, Kala.org.

**La Peña Cultural Center. Dignified [illegible] Sisters in the Struggle** Dignified Rebellion is a graphic arts collaboration between artists Melanie Cervantes and Jesus Barraza. Opening reception Dec. 15, 3-5:30pm. Through Jan. 2, 2013. free. 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568. LaPena.org.

**LoQuiVive Gallery. [illegible] and Other Documentation** A six-artist, multi-media exhibit exploring the ideas of [illegible] and ideology. Opening reception Dec. 1 at 1pm. Mondays-Fridays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Continues through Dec. 28. 1525 Webster St., Oakland. 510-499-1680. LoQuiVive.com.

**[illegible] Johnston. [illegible] All the [illegible] Sequence** An installation of paintings and [illegible] installations by [illegible]. Opening reception Nov. 18, 4-6pm. Sundays, 1-4 p.m. Continues through Dec. 30. free. 1201 Sixth St., Berkeley. 510-558-0333. [illegible]Johnston.org.

**Mercury 20 Gallery. "After the Fall"** A group show under the theme "After the Fall." Open First Fridays from 6-9pm. Artists' reception, Sat., Dec. 15th, 4-6pm. Thursdays-Saturdays, 12-6 p.m. Continues through Jan. 12. free. 415 25th St., Oakland. 510-[illegible]. Mercury20Gallery.com.

**Mrs. Dalloway's. [illegible] Views of the Natural [illegible]** A photography exhibit by [illegible] and Gary [illegible]. Through Jan. 2, 2013. free. 2904 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-704-8222. MrsDalloways.com.

**Oaklandish Center. Piedmont Avenue Art Walk** With art, entertainment, and refreshments. Participating [illegible] art works in storefronts. Third Thursday of every month, 6-9 p.m. free. PiedmontAvenue.org. Splash Pad Park, between Grand and Lakeshore avenues, Oakland. Oaklandish.org.

**Point Richmond Third Thursday Art Walk** With art, activities, and refreshments hosted at art galleries, gift [illegible], and restaurants throughout Richmond downtown. Point Richmond. Third Thursday of every month, 6-9 p.m. PointRichmondArtCollective.org. Park Pl., Richmond.

**Pro Arts Gallery. Over/Under** Selections by Naomi Beckwith, Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. Through Jan. 11, 2013. **Juried Annual 2012** Pro Arts' annual juried exhibition of the best new work in the Bay Area. Through Jan. 12, 2013. 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland. 510-763-4361, ProArtsGallery.org.

**Re-Create Gallery. Re-Create Exhibition** A recycled art competition featuring works from Oakland students creating art using 100% found, reused or recycled materials. Wednesdays-Fridays, 12-5 p.m. Continues through Dec. 21. free. 1428 Broadway St., Oakland.

**Rhythmix Cultural Works. "No Matter Too Great or Small"** Twelve paintings by Mark P. [illegible]. Wednesdays, 6-8 p.m. Continues through Jan. 4. free. 2513 Blanding Ave., Alameda. 510-865-5060. Rhythmix.org.

**San Pablo Art Gallery. "Mandalas"** Digital photographs by [illegible] Oakes and paintings by Barbara [illegible]. Saturdays, Sundays, 12-4 p.m. Continues through Jan. 13. free. 13831 San Pablo Ave., San Pablo. 510-232-6810. Ci.San-Pablo.ca.us.

**SLATE contemporary. Patricia Thomas: "Periodic Table"** Paintings exploring themes of visual imagery, stories, home, and comfort. Thursdays-Saturdays, 12-6 p.m. Continues through Dec. 22. free. 473 25th St., Oakland. 510-326-0850. SlateArtAndDesign.com.

**Swarm Gallery. Swarm Gallery** Showing work in the gallery. Through Dec. 22. **James Sanning** Showing in the project room. Through Dec. 29. 560 2nd St., Oakland. 510-839-2787. SwarmGallery.com.

**Tilden Park Environmental Education Center. East Bay Youth [illegible] Exhibit** Featuring videos, posters, drawings and poetry by East Bay youth. Tuesdays-Sundays, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31. free. North end of Central Park Drive, Berkeley. 888-327-2757. EBParks.org.

**Trax Gallery. Linda [illegible] and [illegible] Witt** Sculptural pieces from the two artists. Wednesdays-Sundays, 12-5:30 p.m. Continues through Dec. 29. free. 1812 Fifth St., Berkeley. 510-540-8720. TraxGallery.com.

**Traywick Contemporary. Incorporate + Develop** Five artists highlight the gallery program's emphasis on non-traditional materials and media through photographs — some of them assembly "found" — sculpture, printing and collage. Through Dec. 22. 895 Colusa Ave., Berkeley. 510-526-1084. TraywickGallery.com.

**University of California Botanical Garden. Natural Discourse: Artists, Architects, Scientists, and Poets in the Garden** A collaborative project between the Botanical Garden and a multi-disciplinary group of artists, writers, architects, and [illegible] who spent time in the garden and [illegible] to develop site-specific works. Through Jan. 13, 2013. 200 Centennial Dr., Berkeley. 510-643-2755. BotanicalGarden.Berkeley.edu.

**Oakland Art Murmur: Saturday Stroll** A weekly complement to Art Murmur, but with fewer festivities and more focus on the galleries. Visit OaklandArtMurmur.org for a full list of participating Saturday galleries. Saturdays, 1-5 p.m. 23rd St. at Telegraph Ave., Oakland.

**Vessel Gallery. Ensembles and Quotations** This exhibit showcases artists who have used meter, music, and sound compositions as a point of inspiration for their works. Artists' reception December 7, 6-9pm. Tuesdays-Saturdays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Continues through Jan. 12. free. 471 25th St., Oakland.

## MUSEUMS

**BAM/PFA. Himalayan Pilgrimage: Journey to the Land of Snows** Sculptures and paintings from Tibet. Through June 30, 2013. **"Himalayan Pilgrimage: Sacred Space"** The third and final installment of Himalayan Pilgrimage explores the theme of Sacred Space with a pair of large mandala paintings and depictions of historic Tibetan teachers. Wednesdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Continues through May 26. $10, free for UC Berkeley students. **Trimpin: [illegible] Nancarrow / MATRIX 244** A new sculptural/sound installation by the Seattle-based artist Trimpin. The work is created in honor of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the avant-garde American composer Conlon Nancarrow. Wednesdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Continues through Dec. 30. free-$10. 2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-642-0808. BAMPFA.Berkeley.edu.

**[illegible] Hall. [illegible] The 2400 Block of Telegraph Avenue, 1939-1973** With photographs of Telegraph Avenue [illegible] by [illegible]. Through Jan. 11, 2013. UC Berkeley, Berkeley.

**Oakland Museum of California. [illegible] Light: Valley of [illegible]** With photographs exploring California's Central Valley and highlighting the experiences of farm workers and their families. Through Dec. 30. **Playing With Fire** Celebrating the 50-year anniversary of the studio glass movement with work from over twenty established California artists. Wednesdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Continues through Mar. 24. $12. **[illegible]** An [illegible] art project showcasing [illegible] culture. Dec. 27-May 2. free-$12. 1000 Oak St., Oakland. 510-318-8400. MuseumCA.org.

**USS Hornet Museum. [illegible] Experience** Photos and memorabilia telling the story of the [illegible] who fought for the US in WWII. Daily, 10 [illegible]. 707 W. Hornet Ave., Alameda. 510-521-8448. USS-Hornet.org.

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Graham Lustig's The Nutcracker
December 22-24
at the Paramount Theatre

# THEATER & DANCE

## No Longer a Ben & Jerry's Flavor, Wavy Gravy Is Still Mr. Softee

The Woodstock icon and social activist clown brings some friends and some instruments to The Marsh Berkeley

Wavy Gravy said his entire life and times will be on display.

Wavy Gravy — clown, peacenik, hippie emeritus — is moonlighting at The Marsh Berkeley this month and demonstrating that, while his discontinued ice cream flavor no longer gets a hulan, the 76-year-old continues to keep ticking.

This Thursday through Sunday, Wavy Gravy is spontaneously spinning yarns and spilling beans in a ninety-minute performance that may well last two hours (last weekend's did).

Gravy, born Hugh Romney, has had many claims to fame, most memorably as the emcee of Woodstock and captain of its Peace force.

He was also the official clown of The Grateful Dead and the founder of Camp Winnarainbow. And, like Ram Dass (whose life was portrayed in *Acid Trip*, which opened at The Marsh last month), Gravy was always in the midst of what was happening when the times were a-changin.

Gravy told me that he used to do stand-up comedy but "now I have an Insanity Clause in my contract with The Marsh that allows me to sit down and spin stories of my life and times, and even pluck a few tunes on the Ditar. My entire life and times are on display."

The mostly spontaneous performance of *Wavy Gravy and His Gaided Mistletoes* may be surprise appearances from "special friends." "You never know who might come by. The ever-brilliant Mr. Yes Who was a real sweet treat the other night," he said, referring to Moshe Cohen, a mime, musician, and Marsh favorite.

Wavy Gravy and Claus Reindeer, his Santa-costumed alter ego, will also make an appearance. As Claus Reindeer, Gravy was arrested a number of years ago at a death penalty protest at San Quentin State Prison for attempting to give Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger a Life Saver.

Wavy Gravy started his clown vocation when he was asked to cheer up some sick kids at Oakland Children's Hospital. Then he realized he was less likely to be arrested at protests if he was dressed as clown.

In 2010, filmmaker Michelle Esrick made the documentary *Saint Misbehavin': The Wavy Gravy Movie*. Esrick said she wanted audiences to see Gravy "as a politically active figure who has dedicated his life to helping the underprivileged."

The Ben & Jerry's flavor Wavy Gravy (chocolate fudge hazelnut swirl with roasted almonds and a Brazil nut cashew base) was retired in 2003 by Unilever, the Dutch corporation that bought the ice cream company. Gravy said he was "dumped for not being cost-effective."

The royalties Wavy received from the sales of the ice cream went to help fund scholarships for homeless and underprivileged children to attend Camp Winnarainbow, and proceeds from his Marsh show will also benefit the camp and his Seva Foundation.

At the Marsh show, Wavy Gravy will no doubt drop names and tell stories about friends dropping acid, but when I asked him what he was most proud of, he told me about the camp. "My greatest legacy," he said, "are the children of camp Winnarainbow — 700 a summer for nearly 35 years. They give me nostalgia for the future."

*Wavy Gravy and His Gaided Mistletoes* runs through December 23 at The Marsh Berkeley (2120 Allston Way, Berkeley). 415-282-3055 or TheMarsh.org.

— *Erika Milvy*

Erika.Milvy@EastBayExpress.com

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## COMEDY

**The Big Fat Year End Kiss-Off Comedy Show** With W. Kamau Bell, Ashley Steele, [illegible], Michael Bosser, [illegible], and Arthur Gaus. Wed., Dec. 26, 8 p.m. $22.50. Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 2020 Addison St., Berkeley. (510) 548-1761. TheFreight.org.

**"Black Man in the White Marias: The Second Time 'Bout"** Featuring comedian Paul Mooney. Dec. 26-Jan. 1. $10-$30. Black Repertory Theater, 3201 Adeline St., Berkeley. 510-652-2120.

**"Oral, Older, and Life-Sustainer"** [illegible] comedy on aging, death, [illegible] and world heritage. Sat., Dec. 22, 2-4 p.m. free. Berkeley Public Library, Central Branch, 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-981-6100. BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org.

**The Santaland Diaries by David Sedaris** The anti-holiday tradition continues for its 11th year. Nominated for a SF/Bay Area "Isabel Critics Circle Award for Best Solo Performance. Thursdays, Fridays, 8 p.m., Sat., Dec. 22, 3 & 8 p.m., Sun., Dec. 23, 3 & 8 p.m., Mon., Dec. 24, 3 & 8 p.m., Wed., Dec. 26, 8 p.m., Thu., Dec. 27, 8 p.m., [illegible] Dec. 29, 8 p.m. Continues through Dec. 28. $29-33. The Cutting Theatre, 215 Jackson St., San Francisco, 415-788-7469. CuttingTheatre.org.

## DANCE-PERFORMANCE

***The Hard Nut*** Mark Morris's classic *The Hard Nut*, a retro-modern take on the beloved *Nutcracker* tale, returns at Zellerbach Hall. Through Dec. 23. $30-$120. Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley. (510) 642-9988 x1. CalPerformances.org.

**Oakland Ballet's *The Nutcracker*** Directed by Graham Lustig, featuring the Oakland East Bay Symphony. 30% discount on tickets with the donation of nonperishable food item, benefiting the Alameda County Community Food Bank. [illegible] Dec. 22, 2 p.m., Sun., Dec. 23, 2 p.m., Mon., Dec. 24, 11 a.m. $20-$60. Paramount Theater, 2025 Broadway, Oakland. ParamountTheatre.com.

***Once Upon a Christmas*** The annual Christmas classic, as performed by Lesher Center's Ballet [illegible], Fri., Dec. 21, 7 p.m., Sat., Dec. 22, 2 & 7 p.m. $20-25. Lesher Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-295-1400. LesherArtsCenter.org.

## LIVE VARIETY

**Mill** *Featuring "honest mentalist"* Sebastian Rosswell, giving mind-reading demonstrations, as well as displaying "unique physical abilities." Fridays, 8 7:30 p.m. Continues through Jan. 25. free. The Marsh Arts Center, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-704-8091. TheMarsh.org.

## THEATER & PERFORMING ARTS

More Listings Online
Get info about dozens more theatrical events at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com

***Cinderella 2012*** San Francisco's African-American Shakespeare Company opens the 2012-13 season with its popular winter classic. Saturdays, 3 & 8 p.m., Sundays, 3 p.m. Continues through Dec. 23. $10-35. African American Art and Culture Complex, 762 Fulton St., San Francisco. 415-922-2049. AAASC.org.

***An Iliad*** Adapted from Homer by Obie Award-winners Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare. Through November 18. Check online for show times and tickets. Tues.-Sun. through Sundays. $34-57. Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2025 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-647-2949. BerkeleyRep.org.

***The White Snake*** Tony award-winning director Mary Zimmerman helms this world-premiere adaptation of an ancient Chinese legend. Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, 8 p.m., Saturdays, 3 & 7 p.m., Sundays, 2 & 7 p.m., Thu., Dec. 27, 2 & 8 p.m., Fri., Dec. 28, 8 p.m., Sat., Dec. 29, 2 & 8 p.m., Sun., Dec. 30, 2 & 7 p.m. Continues through Dec. 23. $14.50-$95. Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2025 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-647-2949. BerkeleyRep.org.

# PICKS

*The Nutcracker*

### The Nutcracker

Travel back to *fin de siècle* Vienna when the Oakland Ballet performs Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* on Saturday through Monday, Dec. 22-24, at the Paramount Theatre (2025 Broadway, Oakland). Full of sparkle and surprises, this *Nutcracker* infused new life into the company when it premiered in 2010. The first act sets an elegant mood that makes the second act all the more delightful by contrast, with its dancing bonbons, vibrant variations, and mirthful waltzing snowballs. And after a challenging year for the company, it's especially sweet to see it back in the theater. The Oakland East Bay Symphony, Pacific Boychoir Academy, and Mt. Eden High School Women's Ensemble accompany the dancers. Receptions follow the 2 p.m. shows, with costumed characters, sweets, and refreshments; separate $15 ticket required. Sat.-Sun. 2 p.m., Mon. 11 a.m. $20-$59. 510-893-3132 or OaklandBallet.org. —*Claudia Bauer*

### The Hard Nut

If your holidays don't feel complete without drunk swingers, disco, a drag housekeeper, and marvelous dancing, then *The Hard Nut* belongs at the top of your wish list. After a three-year hiatus, Mark Morris Dance Company's send-up of *The Nutcracker* brings campy good cheer to Zellerbach Hall (Bancroft Way and Dana St., Berkeley) through Sunday, Dec. 23. Alongside the Barbie dolls, gender-bending snowflakes, and G.I. Joe, Morris himself will dance as Dr. Stahlbaum and the swaggering Elvis-esque rat king. *The Hard Nut* is a visual feast, with comic-book sets inspired by Charles Burns and groovy costumes designed by Martin Pakledinaz, and it's a tribute to Tchaikovsky fans — Morris choreographed the complete score, which is a bit longer than that used in typical *Nutcracker* productions. The Berkeley Symphony Orchestra offers live accompaniment, with the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir chiming in. Thu.-Fri. 7:30 p.m., Sat. 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., Sun. 3 p.m. $30-$120. 510-642-9988 or CalPerformances.org. —*C.B.*

### Woyzeck

Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck* is a nihilistic tale of poverty and class inequality in 19th-century Germany. But in this top-notch production by the Shotgun Players, the play — as conceived by Robert Wilson and featuring the junkyard jazz of Tom Waits — brings theatricality and deadpan humor to the doom and gloom. The play is full of numb, cornered, working-class heroes and the capitalist gluttons and maniacal doctors who exploit them. Song titles such as "Misery Is the River of the World," "Everything Goes to Hell," and "God's Away on Business" pretty much say it all. The menu itself is fraught with discord and chaos. There are lovelorn waltzes, deceptively tender ballads, assaulting percussion, lively big-band jazz, and sarcastically upbeat numbers. In director Mark Jackson's smart and dynamic production, looking into the abyss was never so enjoyable. Through January 27 at The Ashby Stage (1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley). 510-841-6500 or ShotgunPlayers.org. — *Erika Milvy*

# LECTURES & LIT

*Please confirm with venues before heading out: some events may be cancelled or moved due to the holiday.*

## LITERARY EVENTS

**Art Book/Writers Society** Writer Con Ocean leads a weekly writing and performance workshop designed to generate new material and create a sustainable community of Bay Area writers. Mondays, 7-9:30 p.m. ConOcean.com. The 25th Street Collective, 417 25th St., Oakland. 510-384-3540, 25thStreetCollective.com.

**Book Swap Exchange** Give and get free books of all genres. Saturdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. free. 510-705-1200, BayAreaFreeBookExchange.com. Bay Area Free Book Exchange, 10820 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. 510-705-1200, BayAreaFreeBookExchange.com.

**Writers Guild Book Discussion Group** Call the library for monthly book. Fourth Saturday of every month, 6:30-7:30 p.m. free. Oakland Public Library, Golden Gate Branch, 5606 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. 510-597-5023, OaklandLibrary.org.

**Nola Rock and Speakeasy Thursdays** Open-mic poetry followed at 10:30 p.m. by dancing, poetry, rap, food, live DJs, and more. Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. donations accepted. EastSide Cultural Center, 2277 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-533-6629, EastSideArtsAlliance.com.

**Book and Share Book Club** A monthly book group for adults to discuss any book they please. Meetings held in the fourth floor Story Hour room. Fourth Tuesday of every month, 3-4 p.m. Berkeley Public Library Central Branch, 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-981-6100, BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org.

**Sharing Books We Love** Class members take turns discussing a book that inspired them. Led by Cyndi Clymer. Last Wednesday of every month, 12:30 p.m. $5 suggested donation. Unitarian Universalist Church, 1 Lawson Rd., Berkeley. 510-525-0302, UUCB.org.

**Uniquely Yours: A Region Windows Creative Writers Workshop** Author Peggy Simmons leads a workshop for writers of all levels, experiences and genres: ages 16 and up. Beginners welcome, long-term participation encouraged. Fourth Sunday of every month, 1-5:30 p.m. $1-$25. GreenWindowsWriters.org. Book Paper Scissors Collective, 2238 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-238-8171, BPSCollective.com.

## PUBLIC INTEREST

**Oakland Support Letter Writing** Thursdays, 6 p.m. Long Haul, 3124 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-540-0751, TheLongHaul.org.

## SPOKEN WORD

**The Berkeley Slam** With spoken word and an improvisational band or DJ. Cash prizes each week. Wednesdays, 8 p.m. $7. Starry Plough, 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-2082, StarryPloughPub.com.

**The Blue Candle** A weekly open mic for up-and-coming spoken word artists, poets, and comedians. Sign-up begins at 8 p.m. Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m. free. Dorsey's Locker, 5817 Shattuck Ave., Oakland. 510-428-0935, DorseysLocker.com.

**Storytelling Swap** Storytelling open mic hosted by Co by Dana. Third Thursday of every month, 7-9 p.m. free. Frank Bette Center for the Arts, 1601 Paru St., Alameda. 510-523-6957, FrankBetteCenter.org. ●

# PICKS

Nick Leonard

Lucy Bob Roberts

### Queer Open Mic

While most bookstores are taking a break from lit events to forge full steam ahead during the high season of consumerism, Modern Times Bookstore Collective (2919 24th St., San Francisco) is squeezing in some time for another holiday "c-word": community. On Friday, Dec. 11, it'll welcome back its favorite The Queer Open Mic, featuring San Francisco-based writer, cartoonist, and comedian Nick Leonard. The setup is simple. Participants sign up for five-minute timeslots to read poetry, short stories, and essays of their liking. Although the theme is queer, pieces need not be queer-centric, and participants also shouldn't feel limited by the medium — past mic-holders have performed slam poetry or played accordion. The list fills up fast, so make sure to show up early if you have a piece to share. 7:30 p.m., donations accepted. 415-282-9246 or ModernTimesBookstore.com — *Aaron Gharagozli*

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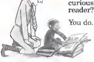

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Nick Yaper-Cox's organic sourdough crust is chewy and crunchy with a hint of tang.

Chris Duffey

# NICK'S PIZZA IS AN OAKLAND ORIGINAL

The tiny North Oakland shop captures hearts and minds with its community spirit, scrappy attitude, and the perfect sourdough crust.

By Luke Tsai

On the surface, "Oakland style pizza" sounds like it might be the punch line to a bad joke, or, at the very least, a simple marketing ploy. In fact, it turns out to be the concept behind Nick's Pizza, a tiny shop on Shattuck Avenue that opened earlier this year in the space that used to house Pizza Plaza, a vegan pizzeria. Conceived by Nick Yaper-Cox, an Oakland native who grew up just blocks away, Nick's Pizza does, indeed, serve a style of pizza that's largely unique to the Bay Area: locally sourced seasonal toppings and a sourdough crust. It's an approach familiar to anyone who's ever stood in line at The Cheese Board or at Arizmendi, where Yaper-Cox spent four years earning his sourdough stripes.

The important thing is that the pizza is pretty great. This is despite the fact that the restaurant lacks the trappings of other so-called artisanal pizzerias, which seem to sprout up every other week. There's no table service, and room for only maybe ten svelte individuals to sit. Everything is dished out on those fake-wood plates I've always associated with camping trips. In addition, Yaper-Cox said he didn't have hundreds of thousands of dollars to spend on, say, a wood-burning oven built with bricks made from the ashes of Mount Vesuvius. He just uses a regular gas deck oven.

"Oakland's a scrappy city," he said. "My style comes out of the idea of making the best food from what you have at hand."

Any discussion of the virtues of Nick's has to start with the organic sourdough crust, which is as good as any I've had (organic or not). Yaper-Cox adds high-quality olive oil and quite a bit of salt, resulting in lots of flavor with just a hint of sourdough tang. The pizzas are crisp-bottomed from tip to end — a crispness that held up even after my takeout order sat in the box for forty minutes. The dough is a little thicker and more substantial than what you'll find at Arizmendi, so it has an appealing chewiness too, in addition to its crunch.

Each week there's a new batch of seasonal pizzas — three or four preset options at any given time (plus plain cheese and pepperoni). No substitutions are allowed — in part, Yaper-Cox said, because it's too small a restaurant for him to handle that kind of customization, but also because he wants customers to experience the ingredient combinations he intended. (Yaper-Cox preps and cooks most of the pizzas himself.)

I enjoyed one intensely mushroomy mushroom and roasted leek pizza, and another that featured apple slices and sweet "Oakland style" pulled pork (okay, I call BS on the use of the moniker there). Even better was a pizza topped with prosciutto and arugula — and I normally hate pizza with salad on top. Here, the saving grace is restraint. There wasn't so much peppery arugula or salty prosciutto to distract you from the excellent, slightly spicy housemade tomato sauce underneath.

One reason Nick's offers a superior pizza experience than Arizmendi or The Cheese Board (as great as those wildly popular — but completely vegetarian, pizza-wise — institutions are) is that there are meat options. I also appreciated that amid the frou-frou toppings — here in the land of fruits and vegetables — there's always pepperoni pizza available. The slice of pepperoni I had might have been the best of the whole bunch — the cheese and sauce in perfect proportion, the pepperoni full flavored, not like some of the blandly wholesome varieties you'll find around these parts.

Aside from pizza, there are always a couple of salads. The bowl of quinoa with walnuts and grapes that marked the start of my first meal at Nick's was healthful and light — not exactly typical pizzeria fare. And all the desserts are made in-house, including the oversized, still-warm chocolate chip cookies. (Yaper-Cox started his career as a pastry chef.)

Fair warning: The pizzas at Nick's aren't cheap, ranging from $20 to $26 for a sixteen-inch pie, at least during my two visits. But if you're strapped for cash, several of the pizzas are always available by the slice — and buying eight individual slices isn't any more expensive than getting a whole pie. They reheat beautifully.

Just a block away from Nick's sits maybe the saddest Pizza Hut takeout center in the world: a tiny transparent box of a store that resembles nothing more than a prisoner holding area, complete with bulletproof glass.

In sharp contrast, Nick's is every bit as tiny a space, but has made a name for itself by being a warm, community-minded kind of place. There are coloring sheets for kids and a Jenga set available (if you can find the few inches of extra space on your table); the staff is to a person friendly and down to earth. And every few months, the restaurant hosts a community dinner where anyone can come and enjoy a free slice or two.

Yaper-Cox said he and his wife came up with a name for the overall vibe: "Hipster with a Heart of Gold." If you think about it, that's as much in keeping with the "Oakland style" as anything else.

◆

Luke.Tsai@EastBayExpress.com

**Nick's Pizza**
6211 Shattuck Ave., Oakland
510-658-3903
Hours: Tue-Thu 5-9 p.m., Fri. 5-10 p.m., Sat. 3-10 p.m., Sun. 4-8 p.m.
Reservations not accepted
Cash, Visa, MasterCard

**Sample Menu**

| | |
|---|---|
| Quinoa Salad | $5 |
| Pepperoni Pizza (Slice) | $2.75 |
| Classic Cheese Pizza (Whole) | $20 |
| Prosciutto and Arugula Pizza | $26 |
| Warm Chocolate Chip Cookie | $2 |

WHAT THE FORK

# RING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH PEKO PEKO'S BENTO BOX

Plus Alameda's American Oak regroups after a suspected arson fire

By Luke Tsai

For the homebody or the agoraphobe or anyone else who quite sanely abhors the idea of standing shoulder-to-shoulder with thousands of drunken strangers to watch some ball drop, Peko Peko, an Oakland-based Japanese catering company, offers an elegant alternative: a luxurious Japanese New Year's bento box you can enjoy in the peace and quiet of your own home, with or without a nice bottle of sake, in the company of a few friends and loved ones.

Priced at $300 for each handmade, three-layer *oda* box that holds about fifteen different dishes (enough food to feed four or five people), the bento is, without question, a splurge — but an appealing one for Japanese food aficionados who want all the joyous extravagance of a fancy New Year's Eve dinner without any of the hassle.

Sylvan Mishima Brackett, Peko Peko's founder and chef, explained that traditionally in Japan the New Year's holiday was always the one time of the year when women weren't required to work. So in the days leading up to January 1, housewives would prepare a number of dishes and store them in beautiful lacquered boxes. (In Japan, unlike China, Korea, and many of other Asian countries, the New Year has been celebrated in accordance with the Gregorian calendar since the late 19th century.)

"Now a lot of people buy their bento from the big department stores," Mishima Brackett said, pointing out that in Japan even 7-Eleven sells New Year's bento boxes.

Like the New Year's bentos in Japan, Peko Peko's bento boxes will come filled with *osechi ryori* — foods traditionally eaten to ring in the New Year, many of which have auspicious meanings. For instance, this year's box will include *jikase ikura* — plump salt-and-dashi-cured steelhead roe — which is symbolic of fertility and will be presented, strikingly, in a cup made from a yuzu peel. Another dish, *kuromame*, consists of sweet black beans — imported from the Shiga prefecture of Japan — that take four days to cook (a process that includes soaking the beans with a nail to preserve their blackness); these are symbolic of health. Finally, the *tetsukuri kamaboko*, a fish cake, served with a tiny fresh wasabi root for grating, symbolizes the rising sun.

All of the dishes are meant to be eaten at room temperature.

Mishima Brackett said that a simple *osechi* bento box was one of the very first projects he undertook when he founded Peko Peko four years ago. This year's bento is the most sumptuous version yet, as many of the dishes include obscure imported ingredients and high-end local seafood. Probably the most luxurious dish of all: a Santa Barbara spiny lobster served whole in the shell for a dramatic presentation.

In addition, Mishima Brackett worked with his father, an expert in Japanese carpentry and woodwork, to build all of the cedar boxes by hand.

Customers who order boxes will be able to pick them up on December 31 at specified locations in San Francisco and Oakland. The pickup spot in Oakland had yet to be finalized as of this printing.

This year Mishima Brackett is making fifty of the boxes, available for pre-order on a first-come, first-served basis. He expects to sell out early (last year he sold his last box on Christmas Eve), so if you're interested, reserve your box (by sending an email to hello@ompekopeko.com) as soon as possible.

## Neighbors Support American Oak

A suspicious fire that took place early on Saturday, December 8, not only shut down Alameda's American Oak (2319 Santa Clara Ave.) indefinitely; it also put the gastropub and whiskey saloon's entire staff out of work just two weeks before Christmas — a tough break if there ever was one.

"Even if insurance covers [the staff's] wages, it can't replace their tips," co-owner Melanie Hartman noted.

Thank goodness, then, for the kindness of neighbors. According Hartman, ever since word about the fire got around last week, there has been an outpouring of support from bars and restaurants in the area. Several of them are even hosting events to help raise money for American Oak's employees. Swell Bar (1539 Lincoln Ave.) already donated 50 percent of its sales this past Saturday to the staff. Angela's Bistro and Bar (2301 Central Ave.) donated all of the cash tips from this week's "Mojito Monday" event, and will donate all proceeds from its Friday Night Flights ($10 for two glasses of wine) on December 21 as well. Finally, Pappo (2320 Central Ave.) will chip in by hosting a holiday dinner for the American Oak staff.

In the meantime, the Alameda Police Department continues its investigation into the fire, which firefighters on the scene had deemed "suspicious" due to the fact that the fire appeared to have started in two different locations — a likely sign of arson.

Alameda police did not immediately return What the Fork's request for further information. And while Hartman wasn't at liberty to discuss the details, she did go so far as to say: "It was absolutely deliberately set; there's no doubt about that."

She declined to comment on a possible motive for the alleged crime.

According to Hartman, the timeline for reopening the restaurant is still uncertain, pending further discussion with insurance companies and cleaning companies — she said most of the damage to the interior of the restaurant was caused by smoke. That said, she said she hopes to be able to reopen within a month or two.

The total cost of the necessary repairs is also still unclear, though the initial fire department assessment estimated $200,000 of damage inside the restaurant, plus another $250,000 to the building itself.

Perhaps the biggest loss: Hartman estimated that more than half of the restaurant's carefully curated whiskey supply was destroyed. ●

Luke.Tsai@EastBayExpress.com

This column is culled from our blog of the same name.

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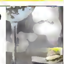

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# RESTAURANTS & CAFES

## Pizza Places

### Arinell

2109 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-841-4035. Californians invented wood-oven-fired pizza because they couldn't do New York style pizzas right. But this joint makes authentic — and tasty — thin and crisp regular pizzas and thicker Sicilian-style pies. Order by the slice or buy a whole pizza to take home. Even better, the service affords born-and-bred New Yorkers. $

### Arizmendi Bakery and Pizzeria

4301 San Pablo Ave., Emeryville, 510-547-0550. A past winner of the "best bakery in the East Bay" category of the Express Best of the East Bay awards, Arizmendi — named for Basque priest/labor organizer Father José Maria Arizmendiarrieta — is a worker-owned cooperative first conceived in 1997 by workers from Berkeley's famous Cheeseboard Collective. Although a full array of sweet and savory baked goods is on offer here — from baguettes to macaroons — thin-crusted artisanal pizza is the main attraction. Only one topping-combo is available every day, and that combo changes every day and it's always meatless, featuring such components as roasted red onions, shallots, mushrooms, cheddar cheese, and arugula. If you're not the take-what-comes/go-with-the-flow type, check out the whole month's pizza menu online. $

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### Boot and Shoe Service

3308 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-763-2668. Inventive California-style thin-crust pizzas are the focus of Charlie (Pizzaiolo) Hallowell's latest endeavor. Monterey Bay squid, wild nettles, Calabrian peppers and egg, potatoes, and pancetta are among the organic ingredients used to top off the tender, chewy house crust. Appetizers such as fritto misto or house-made Burrata show the same quality as their Pizzaiolo cousins. Intriguing wine and cocktail list. The attached Boot and Shoe Café offers pristine espresso and pour-over coffee from Sightglass, house-baked pastries, and a couple of hot breakfast and lunch specials. $$

### The Cheese Board Pizza Collective

1512 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-549-3183. A line snakes out the door and down the sidewalk. Those in line realize that only one item is sold here, always only one, although it alters slightly every day. Because all the tables here are almost always occupied, customers carry their pizza outside into the road and eat it on the traffic median. Serving pizza by the pie, half-pie, and slice, this is one of the East Bay's favorite pizza places. Tourists come from all over the world as well, drawn by tales of a worker-owned, business bakery in Berkeley's Gourmet Ghetto where mostly organic vegetables, herbs, and cheeses from around the world compose a different meatless artisanal pizza every day. The one-choice policy is awesome if you like surprises, sucks if you hate your pizza, say, or peas. Arrive on a day when you like its components, and every bite chortles with flavor. $

### East End Pizza Co.

1624 Park St., Alameda, 510-263-0500. Given how polished his thin-crust pies are, you'd never know Paul Marcusen has zero experience as a pizzaiolo. From a stall in the Alameda Marketplace, Marcusen turns out a short menu of pies that change with the seasons, cooked in a wood-burning oven. The style is a sort of New York-California hybrid — toppings that might be Venetian Sottocenere cheese and leeks, or house-made Calabrese sausage, Ligurian olives, and lemon zest, but applied with such a light hand they don't overload Marcusen's thin, crisp, evenly browned crusts. $$

### Gioia Pizzeria

1586 Hopkins St., Berkeley 510-528-4692. Sold by the slice and by the pie, Will Gioia's thin-crust pizza has the body of a New Yorker but the soul of a Berkeleyan. Brooklyn-born Gioia wins marks with Manhattanites for his crisp, blistered crust and thinly layered sauce and cheese. But he makes the pizzas with organic flour and seasonal veggies, coming up with heretically delicious West Coast combinations. $

### Hot Italian

5959 Shellmound Ave., Emeryville, 510-652-1989. Hot Italian is a case study in how a restaurant can maximize its use of a single ingredient — in this case head pizzaiolo Fabrizio Cercatore's handspun pizza dough. The customizable mix-and-match menu allows you to put your salad on top of a pizza or to turn your pizza into a panino or a calzone — all using the same basic dough. It's smart economics and also a bit of a gimmick, but fortunately Hot Italian's thin-crust pizza is pliant enough to smooth over any wrinkles. Winners on the seasonal menu include the Cannavaro (a well-executed classic Margherita), the Ligabue (with pine nuts and pesto), and the Arturo — a roasted vegetable-and-goat-cheese combo that embodies the restaurant's blending of Italian and Californian pizza traditions. $$

### Jupiter

2181 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-843-8277. Just a stone's throw from UC Berkeley, the local talent checks itself out at this spacious downstairs-and-outdoors pub, washing down wood-fired pizza, focaccia sandwiches, and salads with the outpourings of 30 taps, including eleven house brews. $$

### Lanesplitter Pizza and Pub

2033 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley 510-845-1652; 4799 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-653-5350; 536 Lake Park Ave., Oakland, 510-893-4100. Lanesplitter isn't just a pizzeria. It's a lifestyle. The crackly thin-crust pizzas, sold by the slice and by the pie, are quite the draw but not the main one. Everyone — from art students to young families, shows up at the three sit-down locations — big, quirky and instantly comfortable — to hang out for hours, chatting over their veggie combos and pitchers of local microbrews. $

### Paisan

2514 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley 510-649-1031. The thin-crust pizza concept from the K2 Restaurant Group (Sea Salt, T-Rex, Lalime's, etc.) serves a sort of hybrid Neapolitan-NorCal pie, showcasing farm-fresh produce and high-end proteins on the chewy sort of crust Californians seem to prefer. The space is handsome, with exposed brick, rough timbers, and floor-to-ceiling windows looking out on San Pablo Avenue, but the quality of the pizzas varies (rule of thumb here: the more toppings the better). The day starts with a casual breakfast featuring Blue Bottle coffee, sweets from the K2 pastry department, and a couple of egg dishes. $$

### Pepe's Pizza

2516 Durant Ave., Berkeley 510-644-9699. Costing less than round-trip BART fare from Berkeley to San Francisco, this pizza/salad/taco buffet might be the best deal in town. The salad bar offers a vat of iceberg, another of assorted greens, and a dozen-plus more bearing other components. Five pizzas with meat toppings, five without, plus outrageous butter-brushed sweet pizzas, are refreshed and replaced every fifteen minutes. A nacho machine and taco bar expand the majesty with beef, refried beans, sour cream, salsa, chopped veggies, and shredded cheese. Cold-drink machines dispense twelve different beverages, and soft-serve ice cream comes in two flavors. A gigantic flat-screen TV airs sports constantly, which is distracting — but rugs absorb much of the sound, so you can actually relax here. The price is certainly relaxing. $

# RECENTLY REVIEWED

**Belli Osteria**
2[illegible] Ave., Berkeley, 510-704-[illegible]. When Paul Opresco opened Belli Osteria, a handsome Italian restaurant in downtown Berkeley, he saw there was a niche that hadn't been filled. No one was giving ravioli their due respect. With his fresh pasta dishes, Opresco marries Old World cooking methods with the creativity made possible by the bountiful produce of Northern California. The results are mostly quite good: Belli's rustic, handmade, oversize ravioli may not have the melt-in-your-mouth tenderness of the most delicate fresh pastas, but they make up for it in the quality of the fillings, which rotate with the seasons. One featured mellow sweet potatoes, roasted garlic, and goat cheese; another had savory cabbage and braised pork; and yet another, a black squid-ink ravioli, was filled with shrimp and spinach. Prices aren't low for the portion size, but lunch — priced at two to three dollars less per entrée — is a decent deal. $$$

**Destino**
3920 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-788-4152. After more than a decade serving upscale American comfort food, restaurateur Gary Rimm has hopped onto a new trend: Latin-American restaurants that take traditional fare and gussy it up with high-quality local, seasonal ingredients. Destino, Rimm's new spot on Grand Avenue, has a Mexico City-trained chef in Maricel del Rio and a share-friendly menu that draws inspiration mostly from Central Mexican cuisine — everything well sourced and skillfully prepared. The menu changes every few weeks, and while a few items seem to play it too safe (in terms of spice level and overall ambitiousness), you won't be disappointed in the fresh simplicity of dishes like the *sopesitos de chorizo* (little corn cakes topped beautifully with sausage, queso fresco, guacamole, and a wonderfully smoky black chile sauce), the perfectly grilled baby squid, and the meaty (and bargain-priced) chile relleno. $$-$$$

**Elevation 66**
10082 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, 510-525-4800. Can a small, family-friendly bar in the 'burbs — whose chef's background is Italian cooking — pull off a food program that crisscrosses the globe, taking detours to Hawaii, Korea, Peru, Argentina, and Germany? The answer, it turns out, is yes. The gastropub grub at Elevation 66 is as skillfully prepared as it is eclectic, making the food a big draw alongside the brewery's impressive selection of craft beers. The menu changes every couple of months, but highlights during our visits included exceptionally juicy Kalua pork tacos (from Hawaii), house-made sausages served over curry-flavored spaetzle and sauerkraut (Germany), and a wagyu beef burger whose only "ethnic" component was a mustardy curry aioli — the best of that burger's A-plus building blocks. Needless to say, everything on the menu goes well with a cold beer. $$-$$$

**Vientian Cafe**
3801 Allendale Ave., Oakland, 510-535-2218. File this one under "worth a detour": Vientian Cafe, a Laotian restaurant situated on a completely residential stretch of East Oakland, turns out to be one of best places around for down-home Lao food. The restaurant offers a broad range of Southeast Asian cuisines, but the key to a stellar meal is to ask for the separate "Lao Specialties" menu, where almost every item costs $9 or less, without a clunker among them. Highlights include the best *nam khao* (crispy rice ball salad) in town, the super-crunchy baked *sai oua* (fermented sausage), and the *mok pa* — chunks of catfish that are covered in aromatics, then steamed inside a banana leaf until the whole thing coheres together like a terrine: tender, succulent, and incredibly fragrant. Round out your meal with an order of sticky rice, the staple of Lao cuisine. $-$$

**Soul's Restaurant**
6401 Foothill Blvd., Oakland, 510-[illegible]. Although it's pretty far removed from Oakland's main commercial hubs, Soul's is one of the biggest — and nicest — soul food restaurants in town, with plush upholstered seating, a private banquet room, and its own parking lot. The food, meanwhile, is the real deal, like what someone's grandma would serve in Georgia or Louisiana: excellent fried chicken, perfectly cooked collard greens, unctuous oxtails, and Thanksgiving-worthy sweet yams. Prices are affordable, and portions are enormous — especially if you come on Sundays, when there's a sumptuous buffet spread ($11.95 for breakfast, $18.95 for dinner). Just to be clear: *For a little more than ten bucks, you get all-you-can-eat fried chicken wings, and they're delicious.* That alone should be enough to get thee to East Oakland on a Sunday morning. $$

**Pizza Rustica**
[illegible] Ave., Oakland, 510-654-1601. It may be rustic, but the pizza here is fine stuff. This popular pizzeria bakes up thin-crust pizzas topped with intriguing combinations of the freshest ingredients. The crisp wheat and crumblier cornmeal crusts are both worth a try, as are the inexpensive Italian and Californian wines you'd never find at your local Domino's. For the gluten-free crowd, Rustica's specially made crust is a treat; resembling focaccia, it could trick even the most wheat-devoted. $-$$

**Pizzaiolo**
5008 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-652-4888. Charlie Hallowell loved working the ovens at Chez Panisse so much he made them the focus of his own restaurant, a former hardware store stripped down to its brick walls and built back into a casual, stylish space. Pizzaiolo's pizza is good — combinations like house-made sausage and sautéed greens are both popular and refined — but the antipasto platter, baked pastas, and entrées, all made from whatever local products are at their finest, merit equal billing. $$-$$$

**Rotten City Pizza**
6613 Hollis St., Emeryville, 510-655-2489. Emeryville's reigning pizza champ is a hybrid, merging the New York-style slice aspirations of Brooklyn-born Jonas Bernstein with the Cal-cuisine pedigree of Chef John Streit. The basics don't quite hold up, with the thin crust on the margherita not able to withstand the thick coating of sauce. But once Streit starts working his magic on the combos, look out. The Calabrian pizza is a can't-miss, with a house-made Italian sausage (ground with paprika, fennel, and Berkshire pork shoulder); Gaeta olives (striking, though milder than a Kalamata); potent Calabrian chilies; and a sprinkling of toasted fennel seeds. $$

**Zachary's Chicago Pizza**
1853 Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-525-5950; 5801 College Ave., Oakland, 510-655-6385. Winning nearly every popularity poll, Zachary's three locations have been packed at dinnertime for more than twenty years. Chicago-style "stuffed" pizza, with fillings between two dough layers, are the main draw, accompanied by Berkeley-style salads and good cheap wine. If you can't handle the hour-long wait, pick up a half-baked pie to finish in your oven. $-$$

**Price Key**
**Codes assume diners will order a main course and beverage, share appetizers and desserts, and tip. $ — up to $10 per person; $$ — $10-$25; $$$ — $26-$50; $$$$ — more than $50**

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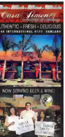
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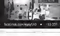

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Getting inside an actual bar during SantaCon wasn't easy

Kathleen Richards

LAST CALL

# SURVIVING SANTACON

In which hundreds of people dressed up like Santa to get drunk.

Kathleen Richards

SantaCon is a yearly debaucherous event that started in San Francisco and now happens all over the world in which people (mostly young white professionals) dress up like Santa (or Slutty Claus, if you're a chick) and basically go bar-hopping around the city, often spreading douchebaggery as they go. For good reason, the event has earned a bad reputation (it's also known as Santarchy). In New York, some bar owners have refused to serve anyone dressed as Santa.

Which is why organizers of this year's San Francisco edition of SantaCon implored its attendees to do good deeds: Hand out candy canes! Give homeless people socks! In other words, "less bro, bro bro, more Santa!"

Why my friend wanted to attend this event and why I agreed to accompany her are still mysteries to me. Nonetheless, there I found myself last Saturday morning, riding BART into the city wearing a pair of fuzzy antlers (dressing in Santa accessories is acceptable). We made our way to Union Square, the official starting point of SantaCon. There, scores of Santas milled about in the cold rain, singing Christmas songs, admiring one another's costumes, and posing for tourists. The crowd seemed to be mostly twentysomethings, sprinkled somewhat surprisingly with some fifty-year-olds, and a few in-betweeners like us. Seductively dressed young women danced on tables, and men drank tall cans out of brown bags. A few naked Santas drew gawkers. It was a spectacle that required more than a few minutes to soak in.

As it soon became clear that all we were doing was, in fact, getting soaked, we decided the best plan of action would be to head to the nearest bar. Of course, that's what all the other Santas thought of, too. Lines were thick to get in to already packed bars. And this was before 1 p.m. It seemed the bros had the best idea after all — we decided to brown bag it.

Not being big drinkers, we headed to the nearest liquor store and bought two bottles of Baileys, then went to Starbucks and got lattes to make Irish Coffee. It was the perfect drink to warm our chilled bodies, and our only hope of surviving SantaCon with smiles on our faces. Despite the rain, we slogged it to North Beach (one of several possible SantaCon destinations), where, organizers promised, there would be a large number of SantaCon-friendly bars. La Fe Lounge was the first watering hole we actually got inside of, largely because we happened to be out front right when it opened. The small staff was instantly overwhelmed, and hustled to meet the demand of the thirsty Santas. Overall, the vibe was merry and thankfully not too obnoxious. A Burning Man contingent from East Oakland's NIMBY warehouse broke out into an East Bay cheer. Responding to organizers' requests, candy flowed freely. Candy canes littered bathroom floors, and people traded chocolate for mints, and vice versa.

Soon the bar began to swell with Santas, so we squeezed our way out and headed to Monarch at 6th and Mission streets, where the official SantaCon dance party was being held. Despite being the middle of the afternoon, the place was packed. Upstairs, the DJ spun a fun mix of Eighties hits. Downstairs, house music thumped a steady beat for Santas sweating it out on the dance floor. Couples made out on a condom-strewn stage, girls grinded each other, and men watched them. It was, in other words, just like any other Saturday in the city.

Thankfully, the douchebag factor never got out of hand, at least from what I witnessed. (I only saw one person too drunk to stand, and he was quickly escorted away.) Creative costumes — zombie Santa, Gingerbread Man, Father Time, Jesus, Moses — gave people excuses to talk to one another, many who appeared to be new to the city or from out of town. (More than a few people asked us if we were "from around here." Living in Oakland, it seems, qualifies you as a visitor.)

All in all, it was not the worst way to spend a Saturday afternoon. It made us wish there were more afternoon dance parties, more random strangers who wanted to pass out candy, more excuses for people to dress up and break out in collective song. It was actually kind of fun — even after the Irish Coffee buzz wore off. ●

Kathleen.Richards@EastBayExpress.com

# FOOD & WINE

## CULINARY & WINE

**Christmas Day Brunch** Includes buttermilk biscuits. Tue., Dec. 25, $65; $25 for kids. FIVE, 2086 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-225-6055. Five-Berkeley.com

**Christmas Eve Crab Feast** A five-course family-style prix fixe meal featuring various crab preparations. Mon., Dec. 24, 5 p.m., $85. Bocanova, 55 Webster St., Oakland. 510-444-1233. Bocanova.com

**Christmas Eve Dinner in Paris** Three-course prix fixe Christmas dinner. Mon., Dec. 24. $50 per person; $25 for kids. [illegible] Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-848-2155. [illegible]

**The Claremont's Unlimited Brunch** Featuring piano entertainment and seasonal favorites. Children five and under dine free. Tue., Dec. 25, 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m. $80. Claremont Hotel Club & Spa, 41 Tunnel Rd., Berkeley. 510-843-3000. ClaremontResort.com

**Equator Geisha Coffee Tasting** Join Equator Coffee & Teas for a complimentary, exclusive pouring of its award-winning Geisha variety coffee, grown on Panama's Hacienda La Esmeralda farm. Thu., Dec. 20, 9 a.m.-noon, free. Mokka, 3075 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-848-9999. Mokkacoffee.com

**Free Christmas Vegetarian Dinner and Program** A free [illegible] on Christmas dinner and soulful Indian classical music concert featuring Srikanth Chary on veena, Hrishikesh Chary on veena, and Kaushal Gopalaswami on mridangam. Tue., Dec. 25, 5-7:30 p.m., free. [illegible], 16802 [illegible], San Leandro. 510-278-3884. [illegible]

**Shopping Old Weary Square Pop Up** Coffee tasting with [illegible] and holiday gift specials. Sat., Dec. 22, 2:30-4:30 p.m., free. Zut!, 1820 Fourth St., Berkeley. 510-644-0444. Zutonfourth.com

**Victorian Christmas Eve Dinner** Seasonal holiday prix fixe dinner. Mon., Dec. 24. $65. Revival Bar & Kitchen, 2102 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-549-9950. RevivalBarandKitchen.com

## FARMERS' MARKETS

**Alameda Produce Market** With locally grown fruits and vegetables, plus [illegible] Tuesdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., free. PCFMA.com. Alameda Farmers' Market, Haight Ave. at Webster St., Alameda

**Bayfair Center Farmers' Market** Fresh produce supplied by local organic and specialty farmers. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., free. Bayfair Center, 15555 E. 14th St., San Leandro. 510-357-6000. ShopBayfair.com

**Old Farm Fresh Choice Community Produce Stand** Farm Fresh Choice runs produce stands in limited-resource neighborhoods. Tuesdays, 3:30-6:30 p.m., free. 510-848-1704. EcologyCenter.org. Berkeley Youth Alternatives, 1255 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-845-9010. BYAonline.org.

**Frances Albrier Farm Fresh Choice Community Produce Stand** Farm Fresh Choice runs produce stands in limited-resource neighborhoods. Wednesdays, 3-6:30 p.m., free. 510-548-1704. EcologyCenter.org. Frances Albrier Community Center, San Pablo Park, 2800 Park St., Berkeley. 510-981-5150. CityofBerkeley.info

**Fruitvale Farmers' Market** With locally grown and produced fruit, vegetables, bread products, and more. Accepts WIC and EBT. Sundays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., free. 510-535-6900. Fruitvale Village, 3411 E. 12th St. (at Fruitvale BART), Oakland. 510-534-0000. UnityCouncil.org

**Grand Lake Farmers' Market** The weekly market hosts more than 70 produce, prepared foods, and arts and crafts vendors. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., free. 800-897-3276. Agriculture.org/farmers/grand-lake. Splash Pad Park, Grand Ave. and Lake Park Ave., Oakland. 510-238-7275. OaklandNet.com/Parks/Parks/Default.asp

**Hayward City Hall Farmers' Market** A farmers' market featuring locally grown and produced foods from more than 35 farmers and specialty food purveyors. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., free. 800-897-3276. Agriculture.org. Hayward City Hall, 777 B St., Hayward. 510-583-4000. Ci.Hayward.Ca.Us.

**Kensington Farmers' Market** With a nursery, fresh flowers, and organic chocolate, free samples, [illegible] fish, fruits and vegetables, nuts, bread, cheese, fresh pasta, and seasonal surprises. The market also hosts live music and entertainment. Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., free. 510-837-0001. KensingtonFarmersMarket.org. Colusa Circle at the Colusa Circle, Kensington.

**Laurel District Farmers' Market** With certified organic produce from T&D Organic Farm and a youth-led prepared food booth called the Purple Lawn Cafe. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., free. 510-482-3899. FoodCommunityCulture.org. Laurel District Farmers' Market, 4173 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland

**Montclair Village Farmers' Market** Featuring organic produce and prepared foods. Free parking in Village garage at the top of La Salle Avenue. Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., free. MontclairVillage.com/farmers_market.html. Downtown Montclair Village, LaSalle and Moraga Aves., Oakland

**North Berkeley Farmers' Market** Breads, specialty foods, all-organic produce, and more for sale, along with special programs and events. WIC and EBT accepted. Thursdays, 3-7 p.m., free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. Shattuck Ave. at Rose St., Berkeley

**North Oakland Children's Hospital Farmers' Market** EBT and WIC okay. Tuesdays, 1-7 p.m., free. 510-250-2957. PhatBeetsProduce.org. Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland, 747 52nd St., Oakland.

**North Oakland Phat Beets Farmers' Market** With a healthy cafe and commercial kitchen space; seasonal organic produce from Bay Area farms, and flea market goods. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., free. PhatBeetsProduce.org. Phat Beets Saturday Farmers' Market, 542 Stanford Ave., Oakland

**Oakland Community Produce Stand** With organic local produce, free samples, and cooking demonstrations. Wednesdays, 2:30-5:30 p.m. Continues through June 26, free. St. Martin de Porres School, 675 41st St., Oakland. 510-652-2220. STMDP.org

**Old Oakland Farmers' Market** Features seasonal produce, breads, nuts and other organic foods, along with plenty of samples. Fridays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., free. Old Oakland Farmers' Market, 9th St. between Broadway and Clay St., Oakland. UrbanVillageOnline.com/markets/old-oakland.

**Pacific Coast Jack London Square Farmers' Market** With seasonal produce, greens, nuts, freshly baked bread, pastries, cut flowers, specialty foods, yoga classes, live music, and arts and crafts for kids. Sundays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., free. PCFMA.com. Jack London Square, 88 Broadway, Oakland

**Richmond Farmers' Market** With locally grown fruit, live chickens, free-range eggs, and other produce. WIC and SNAP accepted. Fridays, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., free. RichmondFarmersMarket.org. Richmond Farmers' Market, 24th St. and Barrett Ave., Richmond

**Richmond Main Street Farmers' Market** With fresh fruits and vegetables, baked goods, flowers, and a range of other agricultural and culinary products from local farmers. Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., free. 510-236-8350. RichmondMainStreet.org. Nevin Plaza, 27th Street and Nevin Avenue, Richmond

**Saturday Berkeley Farmers' Market** With fresh and organic produce, market specialty foods, and more for sale, plus special programs and events. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park, 2151 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley. 510-981-5050. CI.Berkeley.ca.us

**South Berkeley Farmers' Market** With fresh produce and other food for sale. Tuesdays, 2-6:30 p.m. South Berkeley Farmers' Market, Adeline and 63rd Sts., Berkeley. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org.

**Temescal Farmers' Market** California-certified farmers offer seasonal produce, dried fruits and nuts, homemade eggs, baked goods, locally caught fish, fresh cut flowers, and more. Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., free. 510-745-7100. DMV Parking Lot, 5300 Claremont Ave., Oakland

**Tuesday Berkeley Farmers' Market** With fresh and organic produce, market specialty foods, and more for sale, plus special programs and events. Tuesdays, 2-7 p.m., free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. Tuesday Berkeley Farmers' Market, [illegible], Berkeley. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org.

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## PICK

### Christmas Day Buffet

Hark, the [illegible] angels sing about [illegible] Louisiana shrimp cocktail, Texas French toast, mushroom crepes, poached salmon, peanut-brittle butterscotch pudding, and hot tortilla mimosas. A Christmas Day brunch buffet on Tuesday, Dec. 25, at FIVE (2086 Allston Way, Berkeley) features nearly two dozen offerings including breakfast items, starters, mains, desserts, and more — largely inspired by chef Banks White's Southern childhood. 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. $65 for adults, $25 for children ages six to twelve, free for ages five and under. 510-225-6055 or Five-Berkeley.com — *Anneli Rufus*

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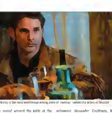
# UNHAPPY FAMILIES, ANYONE?

They either shoot it out (*Deadfall*) or laugh it off (*This Is 40*)

By Kelly Vance


Addison (Eric Bana) is the most treacherous among a trio of mixed-up, violent characters in *Deadfall*.

It's the essence of film noir: three wrongos on a collision course with no hope of avoiding disaster — a trio of mixed-up, violent people heading for a crackup on a snowy country road somewhere in Michigan. Obviously the most treacherous is Addison, played by Eric Bana with a Southern accent and a permanent blood-leer on his face. As we join the action in Stefan Ruzowitzky's *Deadfall*, Addison, in the company of his slutty kid sister Liza (Olivia Wilde) and a disposable accomplice, is in the midst of fleeing the successful knockover of a casino with a satchel of cash. Suddenly things begin to crumble. But then matters had been a little hinky between the brother and sister long before that. They clearly have an unhealthy sibling relationship.

The only thing Addison and Liza need to touch off their own private World War III is a character like Jay (Charlie Hunnam), a short-fused young man who, as it happens, that same day is being released from the Wayne County Correctional Facility in Detroit. First thing Jay does on the outside, after checking in tersely with his mom and dad (Sissy Spacek and Kris Kristofferson), is to pay a visit to his old boxing gym, where Ronnie, the fight manager (John Robinson) is none too happy to see him. Jay won a silver medal at the Beijing Olympics in 2008, but evidently there was a slipup later on — something about the boxing commission and a cigar box with money in it that Jay believes is his.

Accidents and inevitabilities take place, and before long Addison, Liza, Jay, and Jay's parents are seated around the table at the parents' farm house enjoying a particularly loathsome Thanksgiving dinner. A feast of misgivings. A Turkey Day hostage situation.

*Deadfall*, the latest in a remarkable procession of solid, often highly imaginative, no-frills genre movies released in 2012, shows director Ruzowitzky — he made the Holocaust/gangster film *The Counterfeiters* — manipulating a stripped-down film noir scenario so as to wring every last ounce of menace out of it before it evaporates. What Zach Dean's screenplay lacks, Austrian-based director Ruzowitzky paints in with bold, elemental strokes on the dirty-snow canvas.

Bana's Addison hides none of his emotions except the ones having to do with his "little girl" Liza. Stumbling across the frozen farmland — the film was shot in Quebec to stand in for Michigan — trying to reach the Canadian border, he seemingly can't avoid intruding in family situations, most of them horrid and all of them ruined by his presence. It's a treat to see the actor, usually typecast as a rugged hero (*Munich*, *Hanna*, *Troy*, *Hulk*), letting his freak flag fly in a sweaty psychopath role.

Ms. Wilde, daughter of journalist Andrew Cockburn and niece of the late political columnist Alexander Cockburn, faces the greatest acting challenge in the film: to convince us to feel anything but uncomfortable while witnessing Liza in her skimpy come-fuck-me dress and no coat, suddenly dumped into the frigid rural setting. Liza's the epitome of untrustworthiness, with the requisite soupçon of pathos. No wonder Jay is instantly captivated.

**Deadfall**

Directed by Stefan Ruzowitzky. With Eric Bana and Olivia Wilde. Opens Friday.

**This Is 40**

Written and directed by Judd Apatow. With Paul Rudd and Leslie Mann. Opens Friday.

Hunnam, a rough-and-ready British product cast to advantage in dustups like *Cold Mountain*, *Children of Men*, and the TV series *Sons of Anarchy*, potentially owns the best role in the film, and it's a pity the filmmakers didn't make more of it. Unlike hard-scrabble losers Addison and Liza, Jay had the benefit of a stable home life with folks who ostensibly did not regularly beat their children. Compare him further to Hanna Becker (Kate Mara), the deputy forced to put up with a sexist blowhard of a father, the idiotic local sheriff (Treat Williams). When in trouble, Jay's first and last resort has always been his fists. There must be more to him than that.

Ruzowitzky sketches in a forlorn emotional landscape to match the wintry location: a battered family in a hunting cabin, the denizens of the Stag Saloon, a dreary truck-stop motel, etc. Archetypal settings and stock characters animated by crisp, direct action scenes of beatings and shootings. What a delightfully sour piece of entertainment to find on our holiday doorstep.

Judd Apatow has reached the "Is he still around?" phase of his career. Latest evidence: *This Is 40*, a flaccid, glum sequel to the writer-producer-actor-director's 2007 *Knocked Up*.

One-time box-office magnum Apatow (*Superbad*, *The Forty-Year-Old Virgin*, *Pineapple Express*, *Get Him to the Greek*) has always used romantic comedies such as *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* as a sort of pressure-release valve for his young-male-demographic romps, with the guy-pleasing gross-outs replaced by more snuggly couple-friendly pursuits like reuniting with ex-lovers and emphasizing your inner warmth. *This Is 40*, built around the Pete (Paul Rudd) and Debbie (Leslie Mann) characters, fearlessly frog-marches that formula into middle age.

Pete's business venture, Unfiltered Records, is plagued by unhappy workers, poor sales, and the frustrations of trying to sell old-fashioned rock music in 2012. On top of that, Pete's dad Larry (Albert Brooks) is a luftmensch who has borrowed money from his son in part to finance his new family — money Pete now needs back. On Debbie's side, the aggravations include her own uptight father (John Lithgow), the lack of passion between the spouses, and the implied threat of her outrageously sexy young girlfriend, Desi (Megan Fox). In other words, it's a pure TV-style toothless sitcom. Then there are Pete and Debbie's two young daughters, played by the filmmaker's children Maude and Iris Apatow. So add nepotism to the indictment.

Boyfriends/husbands squirming distractedly in their theater seats between trips to Fox's breasts are thrown a bone every now and then: a reminder of the naughty schoolboy humor that put Apatow on the map; some gynecologist business, the money shot of spread-eagled Pete attempting to address his butt problem, and so forth. But the thrust of the comedy is along the lines of scratchy-voiced Debbie dealing with her pregnancy and promoting a gluten-free diet at home. Typical laugh lines pop up, for instance, when she goes to a singles bar. Pete suffers fools gladly but he's a nice guy. Debbie's anxieties revolve around birthdays and the onset of honesty. Russell Brand is nowhere in sight. This is not 40. This is forgettable. ■

Kelly.Vance@EastBayExpress.com

# MOVIES & THEATERS

*To learn where a movie is playing, go to EastBayExpress.com or scan the QR code. Capsule reviews are written by J.R. Jones (J.J.), Ben Sachs (B.S.), and Kelly Vance (K.V.). For a schedule of repertory films, see One-Night Stands at the end of these listings. Please send info fourteen days before event date to Ellen.Cushing@EastBayExpress.com*

*Please confirm with movie theaters before heading out — some screenings may be cancelled or moved due to the holiday.*

## OPENING

**The Guilt Trip** Stuck in a car with Barbra Streisand and Seth Rogen. Andy (Rogen) is an unsuccessful cleaning products inventor who takes his widowed mother (Streisand) along on a cross-country road trip, where much allegedly humorous bonding takes place. Every bit as bad as it sounds, with dialogue a notch or two dumber than you'd find on TV. [illegible] Rogen seems to be regaining all the weight he reportedly lost, [illegible] his characterization of a pudgy mama's boy. A Disney property, written by Dan Fogelman (TV's *The Neighbors*, *Cars 2*) and directed by Anne Fletcher (*The Proposal*). (95 min.) (K.V.)

**Hyde Park on Hudson** Everything you were aching to know about that fateful weekend in 1939 when King George VI of England (Samuel West) and his wife Queen Elizabeth (Olivia Colman) paid a visit to the country digs of President Franklin D. Roosevelt (Bill Murray, looking dyspeptic) and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt (Olivia Williams) — with FDR's virtual cousin and secret lover Margaret Stuckley (Laura Linney) hovering [illegible] in the wings. Hampered by Murray's weird acting and the far-fetched [illegible] of mousy Margaret's [illegible] shenanigans, the only things director Roger Michell and writer [illegible] (94 min.) (K.V.)

**Jack Reacher** Tom Cruise action vehicle. [illegible] the star as a retired Army military police officer on the trail of a suspected sniper. Written and directed by Christopher McQuarrie, based on a novel by Lee Child; also starring Rosamund Pike, Robert Duvall, and Werner Herzog. (130 min.)

**This Is 40** One-time comedy commander Judd Apatow takes it easy [illegible] and slides further into irrelevance with a [illegible] reprising Pete (Paul Rudd) and Debbie (Leslie Mann), as their marriage encounters some turbulence on the way to middle age. The [illegible] TV-style situations are bad enough, but Apatow's casting of his own daughters, [illegible] as the couple's children [illegible] to new heights. This isn't forty. It's forgettable. Costarring Albert Brooks and Megan Fox. (134 min.) (K.V.)

## ONGOING

**Anna Karenina** All the busy "staginess" added by director Joe Wright and screenwriter Tom Stoppard can't save this gooey [illegible] of the Leo Tolstoy [illegible]. Wright gets [illegible] Keira Knightley [illegible] heroine [illegible] Aaron Taylor-Johnson's inconsequential Count Vronsky [illegible]. That leaves Jude Law, as dour Karenin, and the generally hard-working supporting cast — Domhnall Gleeson, Kelly Macdonald, Alicia Vikander, Matthew Macfadyen, Emily Watson, et al. — to shoulder the load. [illegible] (130 min.) (K.V.)

**Any Day Now** Inspired-by-a-true story drama about a Seventies-era gay couple (played by Alan Cumming and Garret Dillahunt) fighting to keep custody of the developmentally disabled boy they've taken in. Directed by Travis Fine; written by Fine and George Arthur Bloom. (101 min.)

**Showtimes Online**

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*The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*

**Argo** Two [illegible] Iran. More than [illegible] the 1979-80 US Embassy hostage crisis in Iran, [illegible] Affleck, who casts himself as a resourceful CIA "exfil" specialist with a daring plan [illegible] to extract six American Embassy staffers who escaped [illegible] of Iranian revolutionaries in Tehran, and [illegible] the six out of the country disguised as a Hollywood [illegible] for a [illegible] sci-fi movie called *Argo*. While Chris Terrio's screenplay (adapted from [illegible] magazine article) [illegible] the [illegible] situations [illegible] but [illegible] and we're left with a [illegible] production [illegible] against the clock. The [illegible] John Goodman and Alan Arkin [illegible] as movie producers arranging the [illegible] "production" [illegible] a [illegible] security [illegible] other way around. (120 min.) (K.V.)

**Beasts of the Southern Wild** [illegible] a dream [illegible] wondrous, [illegible] family story by filmmaker Benh Zeitlin. Six-year-old Hushpuppy (played beautifully by first-timer Quvenzhané Wallis) and [illegible] father Wink (Dwight Henry) [illegible] in a Louisiana Gulf Coast wetlands village [illegible] neighbors, and [illegible] in Hushpuppy's mind [illegible] of [illegible] Aurochs. But big changes are coming. The child's [illegible] (adapted by Zeitlin and Lucy Alibar from the [illegible] stage play *Juicy & Delicious*) [illegible] of a fairy tale, a child's point of view of a [illegible] The [illegible] by [illegible] Zeitlin and [illegible] one-of-a-kind experience. (91 min.) (K.V.)

**The Central Park Five** In 1989, the "Central Park Jogger" [illegible] and brought a [illegible] "crime of the century" [illegible] of color [illegible] and [illegible] a lone white woman, [illegible] as she jogged one evening in the north end of New York's Central Park. All five were convicted in the [illegible] political, and media frenzy and all five were eventually found [illegible] years later, after they had served [illegible] sentences. This [illegible] documentary by [illegible] Ken Burns (*The Civil War*, *Baseball*), [illegible] and Sarah Burns [illegible] and the [illegible] perspective. [illegible] (119 min.) (K.V.)

**Cloud Atlas** [illegible] Tom Tykwer, Lana Wachowski, and Andy Wachowski [illegible] an [illegible] set of [illegible] David Mitchell's [illegible] novel, and the result is [illegible] takes [illegible] the [illegible] Just the right touch of [illegible] and [illegible] (from the [illegible] costumes, a huge, [illegible] Jim Sturgess, [illegible] Doona Bae, Tom Hanks, Halle Berry, Jim Broadbent, [illegible] Hugo Weaving, Hugh Grant, Ben Whishaw, Susan Sarandon, Keith David, James D'Arcy) and a [illegible] through-story and [illegible] as we weave our way from 19th-century New Zealand to post-apocalyptic [illegible] A few words of advice for [illegible] in the [illegible] Relax. Let the [illegible] surround you. You'll be happy you did. (172 min.) (K.V.)

**[illegible]** [illegible] arrives, entertaining [illegible] touches shiny [illegible] of the revolutionaries of a psychotic [illegible] (Eric Bana) and his stupid [illegible] (Olivia Wilde), on the run from a casino heist, [illegible] with a [illegible] ex-con (Charlie Hunnam), on the [illegible] and [illegible] the snowy Michigan [illegible] (shot in Quebec). Director Stefan Ruzowitzky (*The Counterfeiters*) gives Bana, Wilde, and [illegible] plenty of [illegible] to do their [illegible] thing, [illegible] Sissy Spacek, and Kris Kristofferson in [illegible] gray [illegible] and [illegible] scenes of [illegible] and shootings. Just the [illegible] for holiday-season [illegible] Zach Dean [illegible] the screenplay. (95 min.) (K.V.)

**Django** [illegible] shocking [illegible] Sergio Corbucci's 1966 spaghetti western [illegible] for Quentin Tarantino's upcoming *Django Unchained* [illegible] of a Hollywood-type [illegible] Spanish [illegible] a radical rethink of the genre, [illegible] Sergio Leone. But, the tale of a [illegible] (Franco Nero) as [illegible] dragging a coffin and a tough [illegible] town, in [illegible] to convince us and [illegible] Especially when we factor in the agreeable [illegible] of José Bódalo and [illegible] as the [illegible] and red-headed [illegible] experience, [illegible] *Crouching* [illegible] touches as a [illegible] heart of gold. Screenplay by Corbucci, with the help of [illegible] (90 min.) (K.V.)

**Flight** Even though the first part of it [illegible] of the [illegible] airline-in-trouble sequences, this drama [illegible] of the [illegible] personality [illegible] alcohol-and-cocaine [illegible] pilot of the [illegible] (Denzel Washington), [illegible] (Kelly Reilly) [illegible] he [illegible] a cigarette [illegible] in a hospital stairwell. From their performances are of the [illegible] variety, even when screenwriter John Gatins' [illegible] and high gear in the second and third [illegible] the price we [illegible] to pay for one of Washington's [illegible] Zemeckis (in his [illegible] since 2000's *Cast Away*). Don Cheadle, John Goodman, Bruce Greenwood, and [illegible] support as, respectively, a lawyer, a one-man pharmacy, a federal official, and [illegible] of early-21st-century [illegible] (142 min.) (K.V.)

**Hitchcock** Anthony Hopkins' [illegible] impersonation of Alfred Hitchcock is only the starting point for [illegible] and playfully watchable movie-movie tribute to the [illegible] of Suspense, set during the production of *Psycho* in 1960. The [illegible] for director Sacha Gervasi (*Anvil! The Story of Anvil*) [illegible] the cast-within-the-cast [illegible] Scarlett Johansson as Janet Leigh, [illegible] D'Arcy as Anthony Perkins, Jessica Biel as Vera Miles [illegible] each [illegible] But the [illegible] of the film is in the [illegible] relationship of Hitch and his wife/editor/writing [illegible] Alma Reville (a [illegible] Helen Mirren), [illegible] their way to [illegible] Hitchcock's biggest [illegible] Screenplay by John J. McLaughlin (*Black Swan*) [illegible] by [illegible] (98 min.) (K.V.)

**The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey** [illegible] that at age ten or eleven, a [illegible] the greatest movie we had ever seen in our lives, and only a [illegible] of the putative audience for Peter Jackson's prequel to *Lord of the Rings* [illegible] the [illegible] and pre-teen category, as we're [illegible] and [illegible] the most [illegible] fantasy of 2012. With help from [illegible] Guillermo del Toro and writers Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens, [illegible] the [illegible] tale of the [illegible] Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman), the [illegible] Gandalf (Ian McKellen), a band of [illegible] and their quest into the land of [illegible] At the heart of it, Andy Serkis [illegible] as the [illegible] Gollum, the [illegible] the star of this [illegible] trip into [illegible] imagination. All that wonderment is [illegible] a bit, of course, when we realize that Parts Two and Three are already lined up for production. So the journey never really ends. Maybe that's the point. Also with Christopher Lee, Cate Blanchett, Hugo Weaving, Sylvester McCoy, [illegible] Armitage, and Barry Humphries. (169 min.) (K.V.)

**A Late Quartet** Members of a string [illegible] to stay together in the [illegible] production [illegible] Starring Philip Seymour Hoffman, Christopher Walken, and Catherine Keener. (105 min.)

**Life of Pi** As Indian teenage boy [illegible] Pi Patel (played by first-timer Suraj Sharma) [illegible] adult [illegible] a huge Bengal tiger [illegible] Richard Parker. How Pi and [illegible] get there and what happens [illegible] one of the [illegible] shipwreck [illegible] We [illegible] to let it go at that and enjoy director Ang Lee's 3D [illegible] The visual magic is quite astounding. The [illegible] by screenwriter David Magee from the novel by Yann Martel [illegible] And as that [illegible] waiting for a [illegible] never arrives. [illegible] admire the [illegible] for their [illegible] Enthusiasts of filmmaker Lee's [illegible] (*Brokeback Mountain*, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, *The Ice Storm*) may well feel they're being [illegible] story. Co-starring [illegible] Irrfan Khan, Tabu, and Gérard Depardieu. (127 min.) (K.V.)

**Lincoln** Although it's weighed down by the "full Spielberg" [illegible] the phases of the US Civil War and the [illegible] Steven Spielberg's [illegible] of the [illegible] of Abraham Lincoln's [illegible] by Daniel Day-Lewis' performance in the [illegible] The action centers around Lincoln's 1865 push to get the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery, passed through an incredibly divided and [illegible] Congress as the War Between the States was coming to an end. We're [illegible] of the [illegible] maneuvering, [illegible] by a huge cast [illegible] Tommy Lee Jones, David Strathairn, Sally Field [illegible] Joseph Gordon-Levitt, John Hawkes, [illegible] Hal Holbrook, et al. Spielberg doesn't spare the [illegible] John Ford [illegible] over [illegible] It's Day-Lewis' [illegible] We end up believing in the [illegible] Lincoln himself and his [illegible] But exactly the self-[illegible] pomp and circumstance of the history [illegible] and yet, what other filmmaker would have the gall to [illegible] Screenplay by Tony Kushner, adapting Doris Kearns Goodwin's book. (150 min.) (K.V.)

**The Master** It's the end of World War II, and [illegible] Freddie (Joaquin Phoenix) [illegible] in an [illegible] who makes his own [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] (his [illegible]) an [illegible] Something [illegible] and [illegible] played by Philip Seymour Hoffman (the "master" of a startup religious [illegible] called "The Cause" [illegible] by [illegible]). For [illegible] the perfect [illegible] an "animal" who [illegible] through [illegible] and [illegible] failure, will hopefully graduate to a higher order of human [illegible] Paul Thomas Anderson [illegible] the [illegible] counterpart to a juicy Vanity Fair [illegible] place [illegible] that America is [illegible] The [illegible] is a [illegible] and [illegible] need to be [illegible] the need to be accepted, the need to be loved. As much as [illegible] needs to [illegible] be accepted, respected, and appreciated for what he [illegible] of the [illegible] in the end, what [illegible] characters [illegible] more [illegible] than any [illegible] ever hope to accomplish. (137 min.)

**Playing for Keeps** A former soccer [illegible] by Gerard Butler [illegible] youth team in the DC [illegible] a horde of randy soccer moms (Uma Thurman, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Judy Greer) while trying to win back his ex-wife [illegible] and son [illegible] and quite as [illegible] the [illegible] Just sit back, try to [illegible] *Precious*), and keep your eye on the ball. Also [illegible] Dennis Quaid and [illegible] (105 min.) (K.V.)

**Red Dawn** Remake of John Milius' 1984 [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] North Korean [illegible] into Spokane, Washington [illegible] a desperate band of local youths to face the [illegible] Chris Hemsworth and Josh Hutcherson lead the [illegible] firefights and the [illegible] if the US were [illegible] would still be [illegible] on hand to [illegible] ten years. So there's [illegible] Dan Bradley [illegible] a production by Carl Ellsworth and Jeremy Passmore, adapted from Milius and Kevin Reynolds' original. (114 min.) (K.V.)

**Rise of the Guardians** Who do they guard? In this gorgeously produced animated [illegible] Children's sense of wonder, their hopes, and [illegible] But first, Jack Frost (voice of Chris Pine) [illegible] Santa Claus (Alec Baldwin), the Australian Easter [illegible] (Hugh Jackman), Tooth Fairy (Isla Fisher), and the mute Sandman need to combat the evil [illegible] of Pitch Black, aka the Boogeyman (Jude Law), [illegible] bring nightmares. [illegible] fantasy has [illegible] and [illegible] a [illegible] watchable [illegible] David Lindsay-Abaire's [illegible] adapted from a [illegible] by William Joyce. [illegible] by animation artist-turned-filmmaker Peter Ramsey. (97 min.) (K.V.)

**Searching for Sugar Man** Documentary [illegible] a [illegible] 1970s musician who, unbeknownst to

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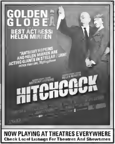

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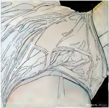

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GRAND LAKE THEATRE

# M&T

[illegible], has become a folk hero — and a legit rock star — in contemporary South Africa. Directed by Malik Bendjelloul. (85 min.)

**The Sessions** John Hawkes, Helen Hunt, and William H. Macy manage to [illegible] a potentially weepy/gooey [illegible] story into a humorous, genuinely moving [illegible] about [illegible] the [illegible] of an [illegible] situation. Hawkes portrays Mark O'Brien, a [illegible] paralyzed man who hires a professional sexual surrogate (Hunt) to give him his first sexual experience, on the counsel of his spiritual [illegible] Catholic priest (Macy). Not exactly the [illegible] in outline, the the playing of the three principals, scored with wry dialogue by writer-director Ben Lewin [illegible], turns it into one of the sweetest [illegible] imaginable. Set in Berkeley and based on true events. (95 min.) (K.V.)

**Silver Linings Playbook** One hundred [illegible] Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper manage to rise above the material [illegible] the Lawrence [illegible] than Cooper and only temporarily [illegible] patient named Pat (Cooper) and a visually lovely [illegible] widowed [illegible] named Tiffany (Lawrence) discover romantic commonalities in the working-class [illegible] of Philadelphia. A clear case of [illegible] David O. Russell [illegible] by the [illegible] support of Robert De Niro and Jacki Weaver as Pat's Archie Bunker-style [illegible] and [illegible] Russell's [illegible] dialogue delivered at full [illegible]. And yes, there is a Big Dance Contest for the young lovers to [illegible] in the Family [illegible]. Russell [illegible] the screenplay from Matthew Quick's novel. (122 min.) (K.V.)

**Sister** At an Alpine mountain resort, [illegible] Simon (Kacey Mottet Klein) makes his living [illegible] stealing high-end skis, snowboards, and accessories from [illegible], then selling them to his friends in the town below. Simon and his unhappy older sister Louise (Léa Seydoux) carry their [illegible] lives with ease. In this [illegible] by Swiss-French writer-director Ursula Meier [illegible] a [illegible] than a [illegible] on human [illegible] playing [illegible] the spirit in a [illegible] or a [illegible] in its [illegible] to Simon and Louise, their dialogue and [illegible]. But in the end we come away [illegible] and [illegible], the same way we might feel after having our pocket picked by a true artist. (97 min.) (K.V.)

**Skyfall** Daniel Craig, plus Javier Bardem's outrageously [illegible] villain put the 50th-anniversary James Bond spy adventure over the top and into the "tipping point" zone. The situation: Bond (rugged Daniel Craig) returns after a worse-than-usual on-the-job injury and finds that his boss M (Judi Dench), government [illegible] chief Mallory (Ralph Fiennes), and the other [illegible] feel he's over the hill. So he immediately goes to Shanghai and Scotland on the trail of cool guy Silva (Bardem), an ex-MI6 agent with a grudge. Director Sam Mendes (American Beauty, Revolutionary Road) [illegible] the [illegible] Bond [illegible] even if the story and dialogue — by Neal Purvis, Robert Wade, and John Logan — aren't quite up to 2012 international [illegible] standards. Really, all you need to keep this franchise breathing is a believable Bond, a [illegible] villain, and a [illegible] Q (Ben Whishaw), [illegible] with [illegible] as [illegible] righthand woman, [illegible] as a [illegible], and Albert Finney as [illegible]. (143 min.) (K.V.)

**The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2** Vampire-werewolf [illegible] and a half-human baby [illegible] the [illegible] newly vamped Bella (Kristen Stewart), her [illegible] Edward (Robert Pattinson), and Bella's [illegible] heartthrob Jacob (Taylor Lautner), in [illegible] "last" episode in the phenomenally popular young-romance series. There's no reason for anyone [illegible] already a fan to see it — but if they did, they'd see a [illegible] groomed combo of female-slanted [illegible] and [illegible] and just the right touch of gothic romance [illegible]. Among the cast [illegible] are Michael Sheen [illegible] and Billy Burke [illegible]. Directed in dull [illegible] by Bill Condon (Gods and Monsters). Screenplay by Melissa Rosenberg, from the novel by Stephenie Meyer. (115 min.) (K.V.)

**Wreck-It Ralph** Disney's big [illegible] holiday [illegible] video-game villain who hopes to turn his life around. Directed by Rich Moore; [illegible] by [illegible] and Phil Johnston; starring the voices of John C. Reilly, Jane Lynch, and Sarah Silverman. (108 min.)

## ONE NIGHT STANDS

### FRIDAY, DEC. 21

**[illegible] & Film Festival** Screening of six shorts, plus the documentary Food Stamped (60 min., 2011). (East Bay Media Center, 7:00)

### SUNDAY, DEC. 23

**A Hal Roach Studios/National Film Registry "Triple Feature:"** Screenings of Big Business (18 min., 1929), Pups Is Pups (20 min., 1930), and The Music Box (29 min., 1932). (The [illegible] Berkeley, 7:30)

### WEDNESDAY, DEC. 26

**In Transition 2.0** (54 min., 2012). [illegible] 6:30 p.m. (Humanist Hall, 7:30)

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ANNA KARENINA (R)
[illegible]

CALIFORNIA
2113 Kittredge Street, near Shattuck, Berkeley
[illegible]

THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY 3D (PG-13)
[illegible]
THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY (PG-13)
[illegible]
THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY (PG-13)
[illegible]
HITCHCOCK (PG-13)
[illegible]

PIEDMONT
4186 Piedmont Ave. at 41st, Oakland
[illegible]

SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK (R)
[illegible]
ANNA KARENINA (R)
[illegible]
HITCHCOCK (PG-13)
[illegible]
HYDE (R)
[illegible]

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[illegible]
LINCOLN (PG-13)
[illegible]
THIS IS 40 (R)
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THE GUILT TRIP (PG-13)
[illegible]
[illegible] (PG)
[illegible]
LAST DAYS HERE (R)
[illegible]
A LATE QUARTET (R)
[illegible]
SKYFALL (PG-13)
[illegible]
SKYFALL (PG-13)
[illegible]
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THE CENTRAL PARK FIVE (NR)
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Oscar Winner Daniel Day-Lewis Stars In
LINCOLN
(1:00 4:00) 7:45 PG-13 Indie Xpress Excl.

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"The Lord of the Rings" trilogy
THE HOBBIT
(12:00 3:00) 6:30 10:00 PG-13

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[illegible]
WRECK IT RALPH
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DJANGO (1966)
9:15 NR

CLOUD ATLAS
(1:00 4:40) 8:00 R Indie Xpress Excl.

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SEARCHING FOR SUGARMAN
(5:10) 8:10 9:15 PG-13

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THE MASTER
(3:30) 7:00 R

2 Golden Globe Nominations!
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THE SESSIONS
(3:00) 7:15 R

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TUES-WED-THURS 11:30 7:00, 10:15

THE HOBBIT 2D (PG13)
FRI SAT SUN-MON 2:15 6:00, 9:30
TUES WED THURS 3:00

LIFE OF PI - 3D (PG)
FRI SAT SUN-MON 1:00, 7:15, 9:45
LIFE OF PI 2D FRI-SAT-SUN-MON. 4:15

LINCOLN (PG13)
FRI-SAT-SUN MON 12:00, 3:00, 6:30 9:40
TUES-WED-THURS 11:45 3:00 6:35

LES MISERABLES (PG)
TUES-WED-THURS 12:15 4:00 7:30, 10:30

DJANGO UNCHAINED (PG13)
TUES WED THURS 12:00 3:30 7:15 10:30

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# BECK GETS THE MCSWEENEY'S TREATMENT

Beck's new album in a book — which has been in the works for eight years — must be performed to be heard

By Rose Gima

Beck struggled against his own writing instincts during the making of *Song Reader* [illegible]

Over the years, Beck — the poster child of music in the 21st century who can dance like James Brown, sample like a Beastie Boy, sing like a gospel [illegible] and play the kalimba — has attracted and pursued an unsurprisingly surprising set of collaborations. He's dueted with Charlotte Gainsbourg, produced an album for Thurston Moore, growled with Jack White, and tropicalized with Seu Jorge. Well, you can now add Dave Eggers and his San Francisco-based publishing house McSweeney's to the list. For the past eight years, Beck and Eggers have been working on Beck's new record which, as you might have guessed, isn't really a record. It's a book.

*Song Reader* is a collection of sheet music written by Beck, but never recorded or performed by Beck — not on a CD that comes with the book, not in carefully spaced singles released online, and not in a forthcoming international tour. Those who want to hear the album can be found performing it in dozens of videos that have emerged online since the book came out on December 11 (some of which can be found at the book's site, SongReader.net). The pages of *Song Reader* are beautifully illustrated by dozens of visual artists (chosen by McSweeney's), the key signatures are imaginatively annotated (the song "Do We? We Do" is to be played "rhetorically"), the covers gorgeous and typographically literate, and the songs are well, real songs. To my ear they seem to have more in common with the tracks on *Sea Change* than on *Guero*, but that might also have to do with the constraints of the medium (my voice and guitar) and the fact that a Beck-level 21st-century YouTube star hasn't yet emerged to [illegible] an *Odelay*-fashioned orchestration. In *Song Reader*'s introduction, Jody Rosen calls the volume's potential "musical amateurs feeling their oats, harnessing new technologies to reclaim pop music from pop stars. We have returned to the parlor — with the laptop camera taking the place of the upright piano."

*Song Reader* is impressive — as a musical artifact, as a book, and as an idea. And it's a good thing, because Beck and McSweeney's have been working on it since 2004, when Beck first approached them.

"Not every publisher is willing to spend eight years figuring out a project," said Jordan Bass, McSweeney's managing editor. "An incredible amount of work went into it and a lot just in talking over the concept." Ironically, the throwback *Song Reader* attempts to 'break new' ground — no contemporary artist has really done anything like it before. Bass said his tenure at McSweeney's, which began in 2005, has been peppered with periods of research and development, pawing through disintegrating pages of sheet music in used bookstores. "The idea would sort of percolate for a couple months and then kind of fade away and then come back."

Though this was its first foray into sheet music, McSweeney's has a long history of publishing books related to music. One of its earliest publications was Nick Hornby's *Songbook* in 2002 — a kind of memoir with a mix CD as a table of contents. The publishing house's yearly music issue of its arts and culture magazine, *The Believer*, also comes with a CD of significant music for the year. And in September, McSweeney's released David Byrne's *How Music Works*, which *The New York Times* called "a [illegible] guidebook for the musically illiterate pop-music player and fan."

Bass called the 2012 publications of both Beck's and Byrne's books a "funny consonance." McSweeney's hadn't timed the releases up intentionally; they just both happened to come to fruition at the same time. But Bass also noted the thematic similarities between the two projects and a connection to McSweeney's understanding of books as a medium to change the way we listen to music.

"Both Beck and Byrne were interested in the possibility of a book because they wanted to take a prolonged look at their subject," Bass said. "It seems a lot harder to do that in an album. A book requires sustained engagement, which is what they were looking for." He added, "The audience is grateful for being engaged too, if you've given them something worthwhile."

So if the songs in *Song Reader* are meant to be performed, not just read, which is an entirely different level of engagement, how does mere text move people to sing? In *Song Reader*, you will not find tracks like "Devils Haircut" — the type that today would have gone viral instead of being picked up by MTV as it was in 1996. That style of music is the realm of late-20th century pop, as Beck writes in *Song Reader*'s preface. "By then, recorded music was no longer just the document of a performance — it was a composite of style, hooks, and production techniques, an extension of a popular personality's image within a current sound."

Those songs are in line with Beck's fuzzy synth and cool, casual intonation in a way that he hopes *Song Reader*'s music never will be. "I struggled against my own writing instincts — where was the line between the simplistic and the universal, the cliché and the enduring?" Beck continued. "Still, I have little idea whether any of these songs managed to find that line. In the right hands, maybe they'll come a little closer to it."

The subject of the corporatization of art is treated in some of the songs themselves. "Don't Pretend That Your Heart Isn't Hard" includes the line *when you turn Tin Pan Alley into a boulevard, then go whistling past a graveyard*. *Song Reader* is a lot of things, but corporate isn't one of them. It's meant to be a collaboration between two popular artists — one a rock star, the other an independent book publisher — and whoever chooses to bring the songs to life.

"We work in kind of a funny way," Bass said of McSweeney's. "We're always trying new things out, and a lot of the time when we hit on something that works, we'll have to catch our breath before figuring out the next move. I think we're stumbling around just as much as anybody, but we're in a fortunate position to have an audience willing to follow us around." ●

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# MUDDLING THROUGH HOLIDAY MUSIC

A self-proclaimed Scrooge discovers seasonal songs that don't suck.

By Whitney Phaneuf

I hate holiday music. I hate its condescending tone (*the most wonderful time of the year*), its empty promises (*I'll be home for Christmas*), and, worst of all, its insistence that we buy more stuff (*please have snow and mistletoe and presents under the tree*). Granted, my hatred of holiday music is a natural by-product of my hatred of the holidays themselves, a time that reminds me of my inadequacies more than anything: fractured families, financial woes, the absence and death of loved ones, the social pressure to get merry, and then those damn whiney, nasally voices ringing in my ear telling me to cheer up. There's no soul to those songs, no layered truths about the holidays, and not even a beat to dance away the sticks of butter. But this year, I wondered if I might be missing something, and decided to investigate. What I found surprised me.

My first recommendation came from El Vez (aka Robert Lopez, the "Mexican Elvis"), who suggested his own holiday album, *Merry MeX mas*. From the Pixies-esque rendition of "Feliz Navidad" to the psychedelic "Sleigh Ridin'" to the holiday-on-the-pueblo "Brown Christmas," these songs are fun, fiery, and danceable reinterpretations of Christmas classics. A friend and music critic at the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* reminded me that The Pretenders' "2000 Miles" is indeed a holiday song, and who can argue with Chrissie Hynde's cries of long-distance longing as an acoustic twelve-string guitar hums in the background? Another writer recommended The Pogues and Kirsty MacColl's "Fairytale of New York," a beautiful and melancholy piano ballad about the drunk tank on Christmas Eve. And the *Express*' own Ellen Cushing pointed me to Lady Gaga's "Christmas Tree," a bizarre pop song with a sexy beat in which Gaga seems to interpret the holiday tree as a natural extension of her overt sexuality. I also revisited the only holiday song I've always liked: "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas," crystallized in all its sadness by a young Judy Garland in the movie *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Garland's voice, accompanied only by strings, sounds as if it's on the brink of sobbing despite opening and extending the end of each word. *We'll have to muddle through somehow*, she sings — now there's the holiday I know and hate.

**Show Details**

'Twas the Night at the San Francisco Symphony at Davies Symphony Hall (201 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco) on Saturday, Dec. 22 (7:30 p.m.), Sunday, Dec. 23 (4 p.m.), and Monday, Dec. 24 (2 p.m.). $13-$70. SFSymphony.org.

Ragnar Bohlin, chorus director at the San Francisco Symphony, described Handel's *Messiah* as an unorthodox holiday classic about the birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ. It was, apparently, one of Beethoven's favorite works.

Now I'm not a religious person per se, but Bohlin ultimately sold me on the masterful "polyphonic" movements in *Messiah*, especially the hallelujah bit, which is often played in pivotal scenes in movies. And so I gave up my precious Saturday night to watch him conduct it at Davies Symphony Hall. Sixteen scenes of sung bible verses later, sung beautifully by the seventy-member chorus, which deserved the standing ovation it received, I decided I needed to cleanse my spirit with some evil rock 'n' roll.

El Vez's holiday album is fun and danceable.

I raced back to Oakland in time to see the psych rock art-punk outfit Psychic TV take the stage at The Uptown. Luckily, it was late by the time Genesis P-Orridge waddled on stage with a few PTV members in tow. P-Orridge, a 62-year-old writer, performance artist, and former frontman of Throbbing Gristle, one of the first industrial bands, is also transgender and an outspoken occultist. He and his wife Lady Jaye underwent a significant amount of plastic surgery to morph into one another, as chronicled in the documentary *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye*; he now looks like a cross between Sam Kinison and Tammy Faye Baker. The band launched into a loud Captain Beefheart cover, its signature art videos projected behind the stage as reverbed guitar and clanging percussion rippled through a crowd of marching, flailing limbs.

"White Nights" has a Lou Reed-like doo-wop melody, simple and repetitive — it's the sort of song that makes you sway, and so we did, eyes closed, until I heard something that made my eyes pop open. *Santa Claus is checking his list going over it twice/seeing who is naughty and who is nice*. I shook it off, thinking there was no way PTV would do a Christmas song, but it continued until P-Orridge suddenly resembled a jolly St. Nick.

Then, before the band's encore, P-Orridge declared the band's mantra for the next year: "Change the world one kiss at a time," he said. "You'd be amazed what a good kiss can do." And then this man, who has been called a fascist and Satanist and who was briefly exiled from his native England, directed the crowd mid-song to "hug the person next to you" and then "smile at the person behind you and in front of you," which I did, hugging a stranger and smiling at a burly punk rock guy, clumsily knocking his drink and spilling a bit of it onto his shirt. But he smiled back and said, "It's okay." In fact, it was better than okay, if only for one unexpected, warm-hearted holiday moment. ●

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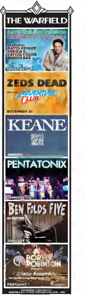
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CD REVIEWS

# RESPECTABLE, BUT NOT REMARKABLE

Three legends prove they're worthy of the hype, just not on these albums

## Big Boi

Vicious Lies and Dangerous Rumors

Five years ago, when OutKast went on an indefinite, reportedly acrimonious hiatus, you'd have been forgiven for thinking it was, at least in part, because of what looked at the time like the wildly divergent personalities of its two frontmen. When André 3000 was the big personality, the weirdo, the pink-clad captain of his own funky spaceship, Big Boi — Antwan André Patton — was always lurking in the shadows, workmanlike, delivering the group's more grounded rhymes, though not necessarily its out-there ideas.

Of course, it wasn't long before Patton revealed himself as the freak he is with 2010's brilliant *Sir Lucious Left Foot*, which paired rapid-fire rhymes and muscular funky hooks with surprising influences and an overall sense of inventiveness. And on the new *Vicious Lies and Dangerous Rumors*, he's at his most experimental yet, employing indie-electronic production, unlikely guests (Little Dragon, Phantogram, Wavves), unexpected genres (The Lumineers-esque twee pop, experimental R&B a la The Weeknd) — for better or for worse. "In the A" manages Southern-fried swagger in a way that only a T.I.-Ludacris-Big Boi collab can, and "Apple of My Eye" successfully pairs boppy, new-wave synths with heavyweight rhymes, but "Shoes for Running" is a grating, lazy, regrettable rock jam, and it's not the album's only misstep; in fact, for all the pyrotechnics and cross-pollination, the album's best moments come when Patton is alone with a mic and his thoughts.

*Rumors* isn't a bad record — Patton doesn't make bad records — and all that risk-taking is admirable, to be sure. It's just not always enjoyable. (Def Jam)

— *Ellen Cushing*

## Green Day

¡Tré!

Like it or not, Green Day is akin to The Beatles for some in my generation. The band has influenced many since *Dookie*, and although its members have battled aging rock star clichés — frontman Billie Joe Armstrong's recent onstage blow-up and stint in rehab among them — they deserve credit for perseverance. *¡Tré!*, the last installment of this year's trilogy (*¡Uno!*, *¡Dos!* and *¡Tré!*), may lack originality, but it does highlight the band's tenacity.

There's a sense of déjà vu throughout, beginning with opener "Brutal Love," a blatant (and credited) rip-off of Sam Cooke's "Bring It On Home to Me." Sometimes the band rips off itself, in a good way, such as the mid-tempo, pop-punk drumming on "Sex, Drugs, and Violence," the guitar hooks on "Missing You," and the repetitive guitar-strumming intro of "X-Kid," which recalls "Basket Case," albeit a mellower version. "Drama Queen" is a thoughtful ballad à la "Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)," until the cringe-worthy coming-of-age lyrics about a girl *old enough to bleed* ruin the moment. The sunny power-pop melody on "8th Avenue Serenade," probably my favorite track on *¡Tré!*, sounded so familiar that I felt compelled to search all Nineties music in my iTunes library to try and find its source material. Speaking of England, "Dirty Rotten Bastards" owes its Celtic-punk chorus to The Pogues and The Clash, but like the Lennon/McCartney-inspired attempt at a piano ballad, "The Forgotten," it borders on cheesy.

GREEN DAY
¡TRÉ!

When a band takes three years to produce three albums, all released at the tail end of a year, the easy critical response is to say it should have been whittled down to one solid album. But since this is only a review of *¡Tré!*, I'll say that the effort shows Green Day is still capable of writing solid pop songs, even if they sound like ones we've heard before. (Reprise)

— *Whitney Phaneuf*

## Scott Walker

Bish Bosch

I randomly came upon this album, listened to it, and liked it. I reported this to a friend who chastised me for having never listened to any of Scott Walker's previous albums. So I spent the next few days listening to all the "Scotts" (*Scott*, *Scott 2*, *Scott 3*, and *Scott 4*) and various Walker Brother albums and studying his lyrics. I came back to *Bish Bosch* feeling prepared. Bottom line: Having a more extensive knowledge of Walker's discography did not make me like *Bish Bosch* more or less, but it felt appropriate to have a better understanding of the seventy-year-old legend whose long career has gone from pop stardom to avant-gardism.

His voice hasn't changed since his first albums — it's still a sad, mahogany-rich baritone, whether he's singing about flatulence or chasing prostitutes — but Walker's backdrop, ambition, lyrics and inventiveness have evolved.

Present in *Bish Bosch* is Walker's penchant for booming orchestral sounds, but his arrangements have become more radical. Still, you get your fair share of the conventional (but no less interesting) hard-rock guitar riffs and percussion. Just when you start to feel comfortable, "Corps de Blah" barrages you with the echoing and vaguely diarrheal sounds of farting (or as Walker intones, "*sphincters tooting*").

Every truly experimental album will make you feel like a raging masochist the first time you make it all the way through, but with *Bish Bosch* you somehow feel better for it. (4AD)

— *London Cruz*

# LOCAL LICKS

BY WHITNEY PHANEUF

## Electric Shepherd

The Imitation Garden

Between the Seventies and shoegaze resurgences, my ears are drowning in reverb. Thankfully, Electric Shepherd understands how to use reverb for its stoner-rock-meets-New-Age-psychedelic. The blues-heavy jams on *The Imitation Garden* range from the two-minute experimental instrumental track "A Mechanical Flower" to the twelve-minute mountain-climb of "Heaven Don't Need," which is crowned with cymbal crashes, funk bass lines, and wah-wah pedal effects. At times, it all gets too far out (man), but there's enough grit and weird here to keep it interesting. (*self-released*)

At Brick & Mortar Music Hall (1710 Mission St., San Francisco) on Thursday, Dec. 20, 9 p.m. $7-$10.

## Fever Charm

West Coast Rock and Roll

Yep, that's a cowbell you hear on "Show Me What You're Made Of," as well as throbbing guitar hooks and chanted *oh-oh-oh* vocals. It's a rock song perfect for a car commercial and, yeah, it'll make you want to buy whatever Fever Charm is selling. Still a relatively young band, the Oakland outfit previously produced some singles of mostly unmemorable indie rock, but *West Coast Rock And Roll* shows it going in the direction of a British Invasion, bluesy-yet-dancey, bordering-on-surf rock sound like The Hives or Franz Ferdinand. (self-released)

At Bottom of the Hill (1233 17th St., San Francisco) on Saturday, Jan. 5, 8:30 p.m. $10.

## Broke for Free

Gold Can Stay

Broke for Free might have to change its name if it really blows up (it's already a regular on The Hype Machine's Top 50), but right now, all its chillwave tracks are free, including its new EP *Gold Can Stay*. The project of the prolific Tom Cascino — who released two full-lengths and two EPs just this year — Broke for Free sounds pretty polished for a bedroom recording artist. Cascino's style is similar to local favorite and Ghostly artist Tycho, who takes downtempo beats and accents them with pop-influenced guitars and bass. (self-released) ●

Bay Area bands: show us what you've got. Send CDs to Local Licks c/o the *East Bay Express*.

# CONCERTS & CLUBS

## THURSDAY 20

## EAST BAY

### Blues, Folk, & Country

**A [illegible] Christmas with the [illegible]** w/ [illegible] Dance Theatre, 7:30 p.m., $25-$39

**Remembering [illegible]** w/ [illegible], storytelling, and more. Ashkenaz, 8 p.m., $15.

### Classical & Opera

**Songs for a Winter's Night** program includes traditional and non-traditional holiday music, including G.F. Handel, Joseph Mertz, Morten Lauridsen, Jewish folk music and "Jingle Bell" variations. Julia Morgan Center for the Arts, 7 p.m., [illegible]

### Holiday Music

**Holiday Caroling on Lake Merritt** call for reservations 510-238-2196. Lake Merritt Boating Center, 4-8 p.m., [illegible] for individual charter

**[illegible] Christmas at the [illegible]** Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $27.50-$24.50

### Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

**[illegible] Trio** Yoshi's Oakland, 8 & 10 p.m., $12, [illegible]

**[illegible]** dinner jazz with guest cabaret singers. The Alley, 9 p.m., free

**[illegible] and Christmas [illegible]** Quinn's Lighthouse, 9 p.m., free

### Rock & Pop

**[illegible]** w/ The Fontaine Classic and [illegible]. Stork Club, 9:30 p.m., $5

**[illegible]** happy hour punk piano. Dona Volante, 5 p.m., free

**End of the [illegible] Doomsday Party** w/ The [illegible], Lady [illegible], [illegible], DJ [illegible] and more. The Uptown, 8 p.m., $10

### Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

**[illegible]** [illegible], 9 p.m., [illegible]

**[illegible]** [illegible] Artheuse, 7:30 p.m., [illegible]

**[illegible] Is Talking [illegible]** The New Parish, 10 p.m., [illegible]

### World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

**[illegible]** w/ [illegible]. Starry Plough, 8 p.m., $8-$12

**Flamenco por La Peña** La Peña Cultural Center, 8 p.m., $20, $30

## SAN FRANCISCO

### Blues, Folk, & Country

**[illegible]** [illegible] 8 & 10 p.m., $15

**[illegible] Carnival** featuring members of Cornmeal, The Lost Green, [illegible], Spoon Cowboys, Poor Man's Whiskey, [illegible], [illegible], Emily Yates, and [illegible]. The Independent, 9 p.m., $20

### Classical & Opera

**[illegible] Christmas Symphony with [illegible]** Davies Symphony Hall, 2:30 p.m., [illegible]

### Holiday Music

**Snow Angel (w/ [illegible]) and Jeff [illegible]** The Lost Church, 8 p.m., $10

### Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

**[illegible]** Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 p.m., [illegible]

**The [illegible]** Li Po [illegible], 7-10 p.m., free

### Rock & Pop

**[illegible]** El Rio, 8 p.m., $6

**The [illegible]** w/ [illegible]. Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 9 p.m., $7-$10

**[illegible]** [illegible] w/ [illegible]. Great American Music Hall, 9 p.m., $20

**[illegible]** w/ [illegible] & [illegible]. Bottom of the Hill, 8:30 p.m., $12

**[illegible]** El Rio, 8 p.m., $5

**[illegible]** w/ [illegible]. [illegible], 9 p.m., $5

**[illegible]** w/ [illegible]. [illegible], 9 p.m., $22

**Parker's Holiday Extravaganza!** w/ The Parker Brothers, John [illegible], Paula Frazer and [illegible], [illegible], [illegible], and [illegible]; a benefit for the SF Food Bank. [illegible], 8 p.m., $20

**Popscene Holiday Party** w/ Capital Cities, [illegible], plus popscene DJs. [illegible], 9:30 p.m., $15-$17

**[illegible]** w/ [illegible] and the [illegible]. Cafe du Nord, 9 p.m., $7

**[illegible]** w/ [illegible] and [illegible]. Hotel Utah, 9 p.m., $8

**[illegible]** w/ [illegible], [illegible]. [illegible], 8:30 p.m., [illegible]

**This Can't End Well** w/ [illegible], Vagabondage and DJ [illegible]. [illegible] Lounge, 8 p.m., $8

### Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

**[illegible]** playing "Central Avenue" inspired R&B. Top of the Mark, 7:30-11:30 p.m., $10

## FRIDAY 21

## EAST BAY

### Blues, Folk, & Country

**A [illegible] Christmas with [illegible]** w/ [illegible] and [illegible] Dance Theatre, 7:30 p.m., [illegible]

### Gospel & Vocal

**"Club [illegible]"** Gospel showcase, plus rap, spoken-word, drama, [illegible]. Bay Area Christian Connection, 7 p.m., free

### Holiday Music

**Family [illegible] Holiday [illegible]** w/ [illegible] & [illegible], [illegible] and [illegible]. Starry Plough, 9 p.m., $8-$12

**Freight Holiday [illegible]** Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $20.50-$22.50

**Holiday Caroling on Lake Merritt** call for reservations 510-238-2196. Lake Merritt Boating Center, 4-8 p.m., $6, $100 for individual charter

### Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

**[illegible] Gypsy Jazz Ensemble** [illegible], 7 p.m., free

**[illegible] Trio** [illegible], 8:30 p.m., free

**[illegible] Trio** featuring [illegible] on drums and [illegible] on bass. Jupiter, 5-7 p.m., free

**[illegible]** [illegible] jazz with guest [illegible] singers. The Alley, 9 p.m., free

### Rock & Pop

**[illegible]** w/ [illegible], We Are the Men, and [illegible]. Stork Club, 9 p.m., $5

**"[illegible] It's the End of the World Fest!"** w/ [illegible], [illegible] and [illegible]. 924 Gilman, noon, $12

**[illegible]** w/ [illegible] and DJ [illegible]. The Vagabond Ballroom, 9 p.m., $5

**The [illegible]** w/ [illegible] Stars, [illegible], and The Special Effects. The Uptown, 9 p.m., $8

### Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

**[illegible]: A [illegible] Hip-Hop [illegible] on the Night of 2012 Apocalypse** La Peña Cultural Center, 10 p.m., $15-$20

**[illegible]** Yoshi's Oakland, 8 & 10 p.m., $30

**[illegible]** The New Parish, 9 p.m., [illegible]

### World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

**[illegible]** [illegible], 8 p.m., free

**[illegible]** Ashkenaz, 9 p.m., $12-$15

## SAN FRANCISCO

### Blues, Folk, & Country

**[illegible]** Zingari Ristorante, 8 p.m.-midnight, free

**[illegible]** [illegible] 8 & 10 p.m., [illegible]

**The [illegible]** w/ [illegible]. Great American Music Hall, 9 p.m., $23

**[illegible]** w/ The [illegible] and [illegible]. Hotel Utah, 9 p.m., $8

### Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

**[illegible]** in the lounge. Yoshi's San Francisco, 6:30 p.m., free

**[illegible] Jazz Orchestra** Top of the Mark, 9 p.m.-12:30 a.m., $10

**[illegible] Presents Holidays From Hell** [illegible], 9 p.m., $10

**The [illegible] Christmas** [illegible], 5:30-8 p.m., free

### Rock & Pop

**2012 [illegible]** w/ Death Valley High, MC [illegible] and [illegible], and many more. [illegible] Gallery, 8 p.m., $7 [illegible], $10 after

**[illegible]** solo jazz piano. [illegible] Bar, 6-9 p.m., free

**End of the [illegible] Party** w/ [illegible], The [illegible], and DJ [illegible]. Bottom of the Hill, 9:30 p.m., [illegible]

**The Final [illegible]** w/ Coo Coo [illegible] and [illegible]. Cafe du Nord, 9:30 p.m., $12-$15

**[illegible]** w/ The [illegible]. Slim's, 8 p.m., $22

**[illegible]** The Regency Ballroom, 8 p.m., [illegible]

**The Sporting Life** w/ [illegible] and The [illegible]. Hemlock Tavern, 9:30 p.m., $7

### Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

**[illegible] Anniversary** w/ [illegible], Prometheus Brown, Rocky Rivera, [illegible], Power Struggle, [illegible], and DJ [illegible]. Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 9 p.m., $8-$12

**[illegible]** Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 & 10 p.m., $27-$35

**[illegible]** w/ [illegible], and [illegible]. [illegible], 9 p.m., [illegible]

### World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

**[illegible]** w/ Eddy Navia & Pachamama Band. Peña Pachamama, 8:30 p.m., $15-$19

**[illegible]** The Independent, 9 p.m., $15

**SF Symphony [illegible] Sol de Mexico de Jose Hernandez** Davies Symphony Hall, 7:30 p.m., [illegible]

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FIELD TRIPS
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SATURDAY
SHIPS IN THE NIGHT
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# PICKS

High on Fire

### High on Fire

Now that Matt Pike is out of rehab and on a diet of "granola and guitar" (according to a recent interview with *The Village Voice*), his band High on Fire is back in business and finally doing a proper tour in support of its sixth album, *De Vermis Mysteriis*. Released in April, it's a monster of a record, with an equally epic storyline to go with it (Jesus had a twin brother who sacrificed himself and became a time traveler or something). It is also a demonstration that, despite (or because of) the Oakland band's many struggles over the years, High on Fire remains one of the world's most potent metal bands. And with the continued popularity of his reunited pre-HoF outfit, Sleep, Pike appears to have plenty to celebrate — with granola, of course. High on Fire plays Slim's (333 11th St., San Francisco) on Saturday, Dec. 22, with Goatwhore and Lo-Pan. 9 p.m., $22. SlimsPresents.com — *Kathleen Richards*

### Churches

If Churches looked to Nirvana for inspiration for its debut album, the Oakland band now seems to be aiming for grandiosity of the Arcade Fire variety, as heard on its new single "Lovelife." A rousing pro-gay-marriage anthem, it's a ridiculously catchy track with a big chorus hook. The single appears on the band's newly released seven-inch, which also includes a dancey remix of the track by local producer Yalls. The Oakland trio will celebrate its new release at Bottom of the Hill (1233 17th St., San Francisco) on Saturday, Dec. 22, with Tijuana Panthers, Toshio Hirano, and DJ Pat (Churches drummer, whose DJ sets are loads of fun, btw). 9 p.m., $10-$12. BottomoftheHill.com — *K.R.*

Churches

### Great Integration: A Chamber Hip-Hop Opera

The concept behind Kev Wan Kim's *Great Integration* is intriguing, but the show itself is not entirely new. Kim's "hip-hop chamber opera," as performed by his Ensemble Mik Nawooj, has been showing around the Bay Area for years, but it seems fitting that he's choosing to run it on Friday, Dec. 21, with an addendum to the original title: "a chamber hip-hop opera on the night of the apocalypse." Most of the shows taking place that night with some reference to the "end of the world" or "doomsday" have an ironic slant to them, and indeed, it's unlikely Kim actually thinks the apocalypse will happen. But the date's selection is symbolic, and does seem to add more gravity to the already-serious themes in his show: alternative mythologies, corruption, morality, the creation and dissolution of the universe. What's more, for this show at La Peña Cultural Center (3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley), the Ensemble Mik Nawooj is trading its usual octet for a thirteen-piece chamber orchestra. Bay Area underground hip-hop acts The Attik & Rico Pabón will also perform. 8 p.m., $15. LaPena.org — *Lenika Cruz*

### Black X-Mass

Long a local tradition, now in its fifteenth year, Black X-Mass, the *annual* anti-Christmas show presented by Karla LaVey's First Satanic Church. Just to be clear: "Members of the First Satanic Church DO NOT sacrifice animals, worship the devil, partake in orgies, molest children or infringe on the rights of others," according to the Church's website. However, that doesn't mean the occasional Bible won't get burned onstage. Mostly though, Black X-Mass is a place for the dark at heart to watch some bands, eat some food, and party together — in darkness. This year's lineup includes [illegible], The Death Medicine Band, Theremin Wizard Barney Skoney Fetisch, and Amphibious Gestures — bands whose twisted sounds are as bizarre as their names suggest. At the Elbo Room (647 Valencia St., San Francisco) on Tuesday, Dec. 25. 9:30 p.m. $10. Elbo.com — *K.R.*

# C&C

## SATURDAY 22

## EAST BAY

### Holiday Music

**The Cuvettes** Christmas [illegible] in the tradition of 1960s girl groups. Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $22.50-$24.50

**Holiday Caroling on Lake Merritt** call for reservations 510-238-2290. Lake Merritt Boating Center. 3-8 p.m. $6, $100 for individual charter

**[illegible]** Holiday Community [illegible] 7:30 p.m. $10

**Solstice Sings for The Holidays** [illegible] Kaleva Hall, 7 p.m. $10-$15

### Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

**Fred [illegible]** Albatross Pub, 9:30 p.m., $3

**Jazz & Joy** [illegible] of Joy 9:30 p.m. free

**[illegible] and The Lost Tribe** Jupiter, 8 p.m.

**Taylor Eigsti** Piedmont Piano Company, 8 p.m. $20

### Kids

**Los Amiguitos at La Peña** Saturday morning children's show with live music. La Peña Cultural Center 10:30 a.m. $6, $5 for kids

### Rock & Pop

**The Coleman** La Peña Cultural Center, 8:30 p.m. $20

**Cindy [illegible]'s Birthday Bonanza** w/ [illegible] Deluxe and Billy Corner & Share the Land. Starry Plough, [illegible] $7-$12

**Death Thrash Metal Holocaust: Flames Benefit** w/ Short Fuse, [illegible] and more. 924 Gilman, 4 p.m. $12

**The Last Blue Drops on Broadway** The Night Light, 8 p.m. $8

**Troublemakers** w/ The Distant Something and The [illegible]. Stork Club, 8 p.m., $5

### Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

**Dig The Vibe and Save Solstice** [illegible] Benefit, 8 p.m. $5

**MC Lars Ugly Solstice Show** w/ MC Frontalot, Cupcake, [illegible], and John Lewis. The Uptown, 9 p.m., $15

**[illegible]** Yoshi's Solstice 8 & 10 p.m. $[illegible]

### World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaetón

**All Night Milonga** milonga class at 8:30 p.m. then party until dawn. The Beat: The Berkeley Performing Arts, 10:30 p.m. $19 Solstice class, $10 for just milonga dance

**Zydeco Flames** w/ Cajun/Zydeco dance lesson with [illegible] at 8 p.m., [illegible] 9 p.m. $10, $12

## SAN FRANCISCO

### Blues, Folk, & Country

**[illegible]** Biscuits & Blues, 8 & 10 p.m., $22

**[illegible]** Hopgood Saloon 9:15 p.m. free

**The Flames [illegible]** w/ [illegible] American Music Hall, 8 p.m., $13

### Classical & Opera

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# C&C

**[illegible] Symphony Performs "Twas the Night** with [illegible] of the symphony's brass section and chorus performing holiday [illegible]. [illegible] Symphony Hall, 1:30 p.m., $13-$23.

## Holiday Music

**The Snowman:** the animated children's film The Snowman accompanied by the San Francisco Symphony. Also featuring sing-alongs with the orchestra and kid-friendly [illegible] tunes. Davies Symphony Hall, 11 a.m. $21-$81.

## Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

**Thousand Faces Ball** [illegible] OmniCircus, 5 p.m. $20.

## Rock & Pop

**Ad-Hawk** Rainbow Bar & Grill, 10 p.m., $8.
**Pantoum** w/ [illegible] Panthers, [illegible] and DJ Pat, [illegible] 9 p.m. $10, $12.
**High on Fire** w/ Goatwhore and Lo-Pan, Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m. $[illegible].
**Long Goodbye Media** w/ [illegible] Herb in Movement, and Dewey and the People, [illegible] 9 p.m. $16.
**The Musical Bar [illegible]** [illegible] Regency Ballroom, 8 p.m. $42-$55.
**Thizzlamic** w/ [illegible] Reigel[illegible] Hemlock Tavern, 9:30 p.m., $7.

## Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

**The Bayonics** Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 9 p.m. $[illegible], $10.
**Destiny Frasier and The Funk Unity Band** w/ Motion Potion, The Independent, 8 p.m. $15-$18.
**Our California Holiday Show** w/ 2-Men, [illegible] Eddie K, David [illegible], Marshall Payne and more. Club Room, 5 p.m. $20.
**Maysa** Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 & 10 p.m. $21, $35.
**Pantoum Poplar and Volerie Harrison** w/ Wil Blades, Joe Cohen, and [illegible] Boom Boom Room, 9 p.m. $15.
**Vagabond Lovers Club** w/ [illegible] 20th Street Swingset, [illegible] and DJ [illegible] Cafe du Nord, 5 p.m. $12, $18.

## World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaetón

**[illegible] Bobby, and Pantoum** w/ [illegible] & Pachamama Band, Peña Pachamama, 8:30 p.m., $15, $17.

## SUNDAY 23

## EAST BAY

### Blues, Folk & Country

**Acoustical Unplugged** with Ashling, Jupiter, 5 p.m., free.
**Lounge [illegible]** with Ben Rubin, [illegible], 10 p.m., free.

### Classical & Opera

**Pantoum Chanel** Oakland Mythos Fine Art & Antiques, 1:30 p.m. $5.

### Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

**SS Oakland** jazz-inspired [illegible] improvisations, Hippie Gypsy Cafe, 12:30 p.m., free.
**Jazz and R&B Night** [illegible] 8-10 p.m., free.
**The Lakeshore Jazz Lounge** classic & contemporary jazz. Coffee Mill, 5-6 p.m., free.
**John [illegible]** Actual Cafe, 5 p.m., free.
**The [illegible] Trio** Nick's Lounge, 8:30-10 p.m., free.

### Funk & Pop

**Acoustical Sundays** [illegible] Volante, 1 p.m., free.
**[illegible] Pantoum** 1-2-3-4 Go! Berkeley, Dec. 26.

### Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

**Vinyl Toast Food** Yoshi's Oakland, 1 & 9 p.m. $30.

### World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaetón

**Domingo de Studio** Afro-Cuban rumba percussion & dance party, Cafe Valparaiso, 3:30-6:30 p.m., free.
**[illegible] & [illegible]** w/ [illegible] Ashkenaz, 9:30 p.m., $10.
**[illegible]** La Peña Cultural Center, 7:30 p.m., $13-$15.

## SAN FRANCISCO

## VENUE DIRECTORY

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**57th Street Art Gallery** 5100 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-654-8874.
**924 Gilman** 924 Gilman St., Berkeley, 510-525-9926.
**[illegible] Bar & [illegible]** 492 Bar St., Lower Patio, Oakland, 510-444-2377.
**Albatross Pub** 1822 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-843-2473.
**The Alley** 3325 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-444-8505.
**Amoeba Music** 2455 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-549-1125.
**Armando's** 707 Marina Vista Ave., Martinez, 925-228-8685.
**Art House Gallery & Cultural Studio** 2905 Shattuck Ave. [illegible] 510-472-3170.
**Ashkenaz** 1317 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-525-5054.
**The Baltic** 135 Park Pl., Point Richmond, 510-234-1400.
**Bench and Bar** 510 17th St., Oakland, 510-444-2266.
**[illegible] Dance Center for the Arts** 1801 [illegible] St., Alameda, 510-523-0951.
**The Bistro** 1001 B St., Hayward, 510-886-8525.
**Cafe Van Kleef** 1621 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-763-7711.
**Caffe Trieste** 2500 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-5198.
**Children's Rainbow Cafe** 1408 Walnut St. #B, Berkeley, 510-849-1986.
**Club 1220** 1220 Pine St., Walnut Creek, 925-938-4550.
**Club 21** 2111 Franklin St., Oakland, 510-268-9425.
**Club Anton** 428 3rd St., Oakland, 510-463-0 [illegible]
**Coffee Mill** 3363 [illegible] Ave., Berkeley, 510-465-4724.
**Conga Lounge** 5422 College Ave., Oakland, 510-463-2080.
**[illegible] Irish Sports Bar** 1524 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek, 925-933-1331.
**[illegible]** 341 14th St., Berkeley, 510-451-0273.
**[illegible]** 2301 Blanding Ave., Alameda, 415-285-6285.
**[illegible]** 4756 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, 510-338-4961.
**Eli's Mile High Club** 3629 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, 510-594-8686.
**Era Art Bar and Lounge** 19 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-832-4400.
**Everett & Jones Playhouse** 126 Broadway, Oakland, 510-663-2350.
**First Congregational Church** 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley, 510-848-3696.
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**Fox Oakland** 1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 800-745-3000.
**[illegible]** 111 W. Tennyson Rd., Hayward, 510-783-1178.
**Freight & Salvage** 2020 Addison St., Berkeley, 510-644-2020.
**[illegible]** UC Berkeley/[illegible] College Ave., Berkeley, 510-642-0212.
**High Street [illegible]** 1303 High St., Alameda, 510-995-8041.
**Island Paradise Club** 1436 Webster St., Alameda, 510-865-3225.
**Jazzschool** 2087 Addison St., Berkeley, 510-845-5373.
**[illegible] Community Center of the East Bay** 1414 Walnut St., Berkeley, 510-848-0232.
**John Patrick's** 1413 Park St., Alameda, 510-522-1005.
**Julie's Coffee & Tea Garden** 1223 Park St., Alameda, 510-865-2385.
**Jupiter** 2181 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-843-8277.
**Kimball's Carnival** 522 2nd St., Oakland, 510-444-6404.
**Kingman's Lucky Lounge** 3332 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-465-5464.
**Kingman's Ivy Room** 858 San Pablo Ave., Albany, 510-526-5888.
**La Peña Cultural Center** 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-849-2568.
**Lake Merritt United Methodist Church** 1330 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, 510-465-4793.
**Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church** 3534 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, 510-893-2484.
**[illegible] Lounge Oakland** 400 [illegible] St., Oakland, 510-464-3643.
**The Layover** 1517 Franklin St., Oakland, 510-834-1517.
**Lost Weekend Lounge** 2320 Santa Clara Ave., Alameda, 510-523-4700.
**Lounge 3411** 3411 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, 510-531-3411.
**Luka's Taproom & Lounge** 2221 Broadway, Oakland, 510-451-4677.
**[illegible] Sports Bar & Grill** 2720 N. Main St., Walnut Creek, 925-256-7059.
**Maxwell's Lounge** 341 13th St., Oakland, 510-839-6169.
**[illegible] Lounge** 5006 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, 510-430-2755.
**[illegible] Lounge** 2930 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-545-2080.
**New Karibbean City** 1408 Webster St., Oakland, 510-763-0700.
**The New Parish** 579 18th St., Oakland, 510-444-7474.
**[illegible] Cafe** 6598 [illegible] Ave., [illegible] 510-595-5344.
**Oakland City Center** 400 12th St., [illegible] Berkeley, 510-238-[illegible].
**Oakland Metro Operahouse** 630 3rd St., Oakland, 510-763-1146.
**Oracle Arena** 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland, 510-569-2121.
**[illegible]** 2[illegible]2 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible].
**Paramount Theatre** 2025 Broadway, Oakland, 510-465-6400.
**Piedmont Center for the Arts** 801 Magnolia Ave., Piedmont, PiedmontCenterfortheArts.org.
**Piedmont Piano Company** 1728 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, 510-547-8188.
**Quinn's Lighthouse** 1951 Embarcadero Cove, Oakland, 510-536-2050.
**Radio** 435 13th St., Oakland, 510-451-2889.
**Rhythmix Cultural Works** 2513 Blanding Ave., Alameda, 510-865-5060.
**[illegible]** 6745 San Pablo Ave., Oakland.
**[illegible]** 3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, 925-284-4817.
**[illegible]** 1700 [illegible] Ave., Alameda, 510-337-[illegible].
**Ruby Room** 132 14th St., Oakland, 510-444-7224.
**Saddle Rack** 42011 Boscell Rd., Fremont, 510-979-0477.
**[illegible]** 2410 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon, 925-820-[illegible].
**Shoreline Amphitheatre** One Amphitheatre Pkwy., Mountain View, 650-967-3000.
**Speisekammer** 2424 Lincoln Ave., Alameda, 510-522-1300.
**[illegible] Lounge** 2500 N Main St., Walnut Creek, 925-[illegible].
**St. [illegible] Episcopal Church** 2300 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 510-848-5107.
**St. John's Presbyterian Church** 2727 College Ave., Berkeley, 510-845-6830.
**Starry Plough** 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-841-2082.
**Stork Club** 2330 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-444-6174.
**Studio 1510** 1510 8th St., Oakland.
**Subterranean Art House** 2179 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 510-981-1286.
**[illegible]** 864 E. 14th St., San Leandro, 510-553-9600.
**[illegible] Lounge** 1928 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-451-8100.
**Vinnie's Bar & Grill** 2045 Mt. Diablo St., Concord, 925-685-9515.
**Wente Vineyards Amphitheater** 5050 Arroyo Rd., Livermore, 925-456-2450.
**Wheeler Auditorium** UC Berkeley, Berkeley, 510-642-0212.
**White Horse Bar** 6551 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-652-3820.
**Yoshi's** 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland, 510-238-9200.
**Zellerbach Hall** UC Berkeley, Berkeley, 510-642-9988.

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### Blues, Folk, & Country

**The Campbell Brothers** Yoshi's San Francisco, 7 p.m., $20

**Tory Sanssiano** Johnny Foley's Irish House, 9 p.m., free

**Val Carroll & Hart Doose** Biscuits & Blues, 7 & 9 p.m., $15

### Classical & Opera

**San Francisco Symphony Presents 'Tune the Night'** with members of the symphony's brass section and Barrell performing holiday tunes. Davies Symphony Hall, 4 p.m., $15-$70

### Holiday Music

**Dave Koz & Friends Christmas 2012** The Warfield, 8 p.m., $39.50-$75.50

**The Mermen Christmas Show** Slim's, 8 p.m., $15

### Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

**Vince Lateano & Friends** with Andrew Speight, Sam Grobe-Harris and Mark Ghirardo, Bopjourn Session 4:30-8:30 p.m., $8

### Rock & Pop

**Bands of the Roads** w/ Isles of Goldmount, Refuge, Streamside Odysseys, Bone Yo-yo, 3 Simple Words, and Frolled Sanity [illegible] DNA Lounge, 5:30 p.m., $10, $12

**Hickey Rocks** w/ DJ Harvey and DJ Cindy G., Kicks Out Room, 7:30 p.m., free

**MoonFox** w/ Prizm, Mansions Life, The Lo-Q Show, and DJ Christian Jones, Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 9 p.m., $5-$10

**Boom MoonFox** Boom Boom Room, 9 p.m., $5

## MONDAY 24

## EAST BAY

### Blues, Folk, & Country

**The Rusty String Express** Jupiter, 8 p.m., free

### World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

**Bossa Noe Y Go GBA** Yoshi's Oakland, 1:30 p.m., $15

## SAN FRANCISCO

### Blues, Folk, & Country

**Lance Canales & The Flood** Biscuits & Blues, 7 & 9 p.m., $15

### Classical & Opera

**San Francisco Symphony Presents 'Tune the Night'** with members of the symphony's performing holiday tunes. Davies Symphony Hall, 2 p.m., $15-$70

### Holiday Music

**Celebrate a Christmas: Gospel Treasure of the Season** Yoshi's San Francisco, 6 p.m., $20

**Oakland Interfaith Gospel Ensemble** Slim's, 7 & 9 p.m., $15

## TUESDAY 25

## EAST BAY

### Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

**Randy Craig Trio** Caffe Trieste, 7:30-9:30 p.m., free

### Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

**Innerspace** Jupiter, 8 p.m., free

## SAN FRANCISCO

### Blues, Folk, & Country

**Doug Morrell Blues** Biscuits & Blues, 7 & 9 p.m., $15

**Song Session** with Vince Keehan & Friends, Plough and Stars, 9 p.m., free

### Experimental & Avant Garde

**F*ck Blue** with The Neuro-Wide Orchestra and Wavefront, Boom Boom Room, 9:30 p.m., $5

### Rock & Pop

**Dirt X-Mas** w/ Metro Jacques, Death Medicine Hand, Skinny Fellows, Amphibious Gentures, and Phosofide Wizard Rainey, Elbo Room, 9:30 p.m., $10

**Diego's Umbrella** Park Chalet Brewery, 6:30 p.m., free

## WEDNESDAY 26

## EAST BAY

### Blues, Folk, & Country

**Jupiter Darling** Cafe Van Kleef, 9:30 p.m., $TBA

### Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

**Rob Ewing & the Sound Bites** Rooster's Roadhouse, 6:15 p.m., free

### Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

**Free Food** w/ Courtney Knott, Treehouse Orchestra, Kuma Faso, and Bobby P. The New Parish, 9 p.m., $5, $8

### World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

**Annual Boxing Day Reggae Celebration** w/ Razorblade & Blade Band, King Bopeton, and surprise guests, Ashkenaz, 9:30 p.m., $10, $15

**Caribbean Night** with Reggae Flash and DJ Mandak, Cheney's Ladder, 7-11 p.m., free

**Flamenco Dominical** with singer Roberto Zamora, guitarist Bessa McLean, and Claro Rodriguez and Symphony Orozco, Stoke/Valiente, 8 p.m., $7

## SAN FRANCISCO

### Blues, Folk, & Country

**Hotel Crescent Room Showcase with Stacey Wright** Biscuits & Blues, 8 p.m., $15

### Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

**DinkDinkDink** with Gacoho and Eric Garland's Jazz Session Amnesia, 7 p.m., free

**Brennan Sanders** playing Garnett jazz piano, Top of the Mark, 8:30-11:30 p.m., $8

**Wednesday Jazz Night** Amnesia, 7 p.m., free

### Rock & Pop

**Coldcranes** w/ Serenity Flowers, Deer Hedge, Collective M and Bailey Stone, Hotel Utah, 8 p.m., $8, $10

**Finish Ticket** w/ Kamikazi Weekend and Chores, Bottom of the Hill, 9 p.m., $10

### Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

**Jessel Lambert** Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 & 10 p.m., $22, $30

### World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

**Tambo & Salsa Room** w/ DJ Wild Regg & special guests, Beauty Brothers, 10 p.m., $5

*Submissions for music listings should be e-mailed to Chloe@EastBayExpress.com or mailed to Chloe, Editor, East Bay Express, 620 3rd St., Oakland CA 94607. Deadline is 14 days prior to the event date.*

Ashkenaz
Music & Dance Community Center

WED 12/19 8:30 pm $8 — GRATEFUL DEAD NIGHT — DOGPATCH JUNCTION

THU 12/20 7:00 pm $15 — BENEFIT FOR ASHKENAZ — REMEMBERING DAVID NADEL — Bill Cope & Friends, Suhaila Salimpour, Richard Kaplan, Balkan Folkdance

FRI 12/21 9:00 pm $15 $12 adv/stu — WORLD FUSION — SHABAZ featuring Sukhawat Ali Khan & Riffat Sultana

SAT 12/22 9:00 pm $13 $10 students — ZYDECO — ZYDECO FLAMES — West Coast's premier zydeco band — 8 pm Cajun/Zydeco dance lesson

SUN 12/23 9:30 pm $11 — CARIBBEAN HAITIAN BRAZILIAN — MYSTIC MAN & LAKAY BATALA BRAZILIAN

WED 12/26 9:30 pm $15 $10 adv/stu — ANNUAL BOXING DAY REGGAE — RAZORBLADE & BLADE BAND — KING BOPETON

THU 12/27 8:30 pm $15 $12 (bass) — WORLD FUNK — KAI ECKHARDT ZEITGEIST — Renowned bassist & composer's new project

FRI 12/28 9:30 pm $13 / $10 stu — CUBAN — PELLEJO SECO — 8:30 pm Cuban Salsa dance lesson

SAT 12/29 8:00 pm $25 $30 1st 3 rows — BENEFIT FOR ASHKENAZ — FLAMENCO AND NUEVO — presented by Emmy Award-winning dancer Yaelisa

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SELECTOR: DJ LADY RYAN 8-11PM — THURSDAY DEC. 20
[illegible]
ladyryan.com

FRIDAY DEC. 21 — MACABEA 9PM
[illegible] Brazilian ensemble [illegible]
[illegible] .com/macabeaband

ROBERT HOUTMAN & THE JAZZ TRIAD 8PM — SATURDAY DEC. 22
[illegible]
robertmusic.com

[illegible]

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333 11th St. btwn Folsom & Harrison San Francisco 415/255-0333

WED DEC 19 [illegible] SOLD OUT

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HIGH ON FIRE
GOATWHORE - LO-PAN

SUN. DEC. 23 - $15 ADV/$15 DOOR DOORS 7, SHOW 8
AN EVENING WITH
THE MERMEN
- A VERY MERMEN CHRISTMAS

MON. DEC. 24 - $15 ADV/$18 DOOR - 2 SHOWS!
DOORS 6, SHOW 7 (EARLY); DOORS 9, SHOW 9:30 (LATE)
OAKLAND INTERFAITH GOSPEL ENSEMBLE

THURS. DEC. 27 - $15 ADV/$15 DOOR DOORS 8, SHOW 9
ZONGO JUNCTION
SKINS & NEEDLES
(MEMBERS OF CROWN CITY ROCKERS)

FRI. & SAT. DEC. 28 & 29 - $37 ADV/$37 DOOR
DOORS 8, SHOW 9
X-MAS 2012
X
MY JERUSALEM

FRI. JAN 4 - $15 ADV/$15 DOOR DOORS 7, SHOW 8
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WEST COAST SONGWRITER SESSION
WITH RON MACHOL, STEVE FREUND & IAN FAMBOCCHI, [illegible] & STEVE GUNN, WENDY DEWITT & [illegible], STAN ERHART, PAUL OLGUIN, PAUL REVELLI

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[illegible]
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MELVINS

MON. DEC. 31 NEW YEARS EVE
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FRI. JAN. 4 $15 ADV/$15 DOOR DOORS 8, SHOW 9
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TINY TELEVISION [illegible]

FRI. JAN. 11 $15 ADV/$15 DOOR DOORS 8, SHOW 9
CHELSEA WOLFE
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SAT. JAN. 12 $13 ADV/$13 DOOR DOORS 8, SHOW 9
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[illegible] CHUCK PROPHET & STEPHANIE FINCH
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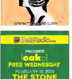
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# DJ & DANCE

## EAST BAY

### THURSDAY 20

**Body Language** w/ [illegible] Aero and Goto Gi spinning '80s and '90s funk, pop, R&B, and hip-hop. Luka's Taproom & Lounge. 9 p.m. free

**Club Fever** w/ Selecta Sam Sound spinning reggae & dancehall. Shashamane Restaurant. 10 p.m. free

**Delicious Thursdays** Radio. 10 p.m. free

**DJ Adell** spinning eclectic ear candy. Kingman's Lucky Lounge. 9 p.m. free

**DJ Lady Ryan** Sporter. 9 p.m. free

**DJ Trick** spinning lounge. Lost Weekend Lounge. 9 p.m.-2 a.m. free

**Hip Operation** with DJ [illegible]. The Layover. 10 p.m. free

**Nit? Nat!** [illegible] mash-ups, new wave. Radio. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. free

**Shake, Rattle 'n' Roll** featuring DJ Ronco spinning '50s & '60s hits. [illegible] 9 p.m. free

**SUPPORTgroup** DJs [illegible] and [illegible] spin an eclectic mix of funk, disco, house, and techno. [illegible] 9 p.m.

**Tasty** ladies' night w/ DJ Mo Jacasac spinning hip-hop & R&B. Club 21. 9 p.m. $12-$25

**Temple** w/ DJ Matthew Fisher spinning global house, pop hits. White Horse Inn. 10 p.m.-[illegible] free

**Ultra Down** DJs Fuze, Sake One, and Willie Maze play dance music across genres. Somar Bar & Lounge. 9 p.m. free

**Uplift Thursdays** w/ DJ [illegible] and guests spinning roots reggae and dancehall. Continental Club. 9 p.m.-2 a.m. $5

**Yerba Dance Sessions** featuring DJs Carlos Mena and Coast. Beach and Bar. 9 p.m. free

### FRIDAY 21

**[illegible]** Disco Volante. 9:30 p.m. $5

**Club [illegible]** w/ DJs spinning Latin music. Club 21. 9 p.m. $6-$15

**DJ Daft** spinning top 40, Ibeats and hip-hop. White Horse Inn. 9 p.m. free

**DJ Night** DJs spinning fantastic pop, mind-blowing rock, & urban hip-hop. Ky's Restaurant. 9:30 p.m. free

**DJ Willie Maze** Somar Bar & Lounge. 5 p.m. free

**Dollar Fridays** rotating DJs spinning hip-hop, R&B, and reggae. New Karibbean City. 9 p.m. $1 admission until 1 a.m.

**Friday Night Salsa** w/ guest DJs spinning salsa. La Estrella Café. 10 p.m. $5

**Friday Nite Lane** w/ DJ Supa K. Fuse. 10 p.m. $5

**Happy Hours** w/ DJ Golden Gram spinning punk, indie, & noise rock. The Missouri Lounge. 9:30 p.m. free

**Hip-Hop Happy Hours** w/ Naked DJ. Club 1220. 9 p.m. $6

**Kolibri Hours** w/ DJ Boy Wonder. Somar Bar & Lounge. 9 p.m. free. $5 Dcovn after 11 p.m.

**Latin Explosion** DJ Jorge Esbose spinning salsa, merengue, banda. Spanish Pop & House. Beach and Bar. 9 p.m.-[illegible] $6-$15

**Missouri** weekly in-home DJ series. Amoeba Music. 6-9 p.m. free

**Mighty Irie** DJs Roots-I, [illegible] and Smoke-One spin reggae, dancehall, and hip-hop. Luka's Taproom & Lounge. 10 p.m. $5 Dcovn 11 p.m. $10 after

**Old-School** Hip-hop and funk. Radio. 9 p.m. free

**Oldies Night** w/ DJ Elsoon spinning reggae, soca, salsa & R&B. Island Paradise Club. 10 p.m. ladies free Dcovn 11:30 p.m.

**Retrolution** Death Island Hosts '80s pop night. Kingman's Lucky Lounge. 9 p.m. free

**The Stellar** with DJ Crimson. The Layover. 9 p.m.

**Smiley Fridays** DJ Lash & Fat Rob spin R&B & soul. Hosts DJ Crimson. 9 p.m. $5

**World Goal Fridays** featuring DJ Tropic spinning [illegible], samba, salsa, merengue, dancehall reggae, bhangra, Arabic music, & more. Conga Lounge. 10 p.m.

### SATURDAY 22

**All Productions & Hoodriple and** spinning [illegible] Texas. 10 p.m. free

**The Down Goal** hosted by Sean Kennedy. Bistro Music. 2 p.m. free

**Club Limousine** w/ DJ Rum and Dough spinning hip-hop & R&B. Beach and Bar. 9 p.m. $8 before 11 p.m.

**Country Saturdays** followed by hip-hop & house at midnight. Club 1220. 9:30 p.m. $5 [illegible] $5

**Dancehall Saturdays** w/ Aztlan Hoers spinning reggae, dancehall & hip-hop. The Avenue. 9 p.m. free

**DJ Night** DJs spinning fantastic pop, mind-blowing rock, & urban hip-hop. Ky's Restaurant. 9:30 p.m. free

**La Gota Loco** Latino cowboy night w/ DJs spinning salsa, norteño, & banda plus hot go-go dancers. Club 21. 9 p.m. $6-$15

**Magic Milk Dough** DJ Raco & guests from genre-surfing extravaganza. Kingman's Lucky Lounge. 9 p.m. free

**Rampage Saturdays** rotating DJs spin classic hip-hop, neo soul, and world flavor. Luka's Taproom & Lounge. 10 p.m. $5 before 11 p.m. $10 after

**Thump** w/ DJ [illegible] spinning mashups, funk, house and soul. Somar Bar & Lounge. 9 p.m. $5

**Total Mind Club** w/ Danthon & Hears spinning hip-hop, metal, punk, hardcore, & more. The Missouri Lounge. 10 p.m. free

**More Listings Online**
Get info about hundreds of musical events at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com

### SUNDAY 23

**The Break** w/ [illegible] and Pastosa Key Choice and [illegible] D Shaci. Era Art Bar and Lounge. 9 p.m.-1:30 a.m. free

**Culture** DJs Kincaid, Roots, & guests spin funk, soul, tech, house, & more. Club Dasis. 10 p.m. free

**Club Googas** Beach and Bar. 5 p.m. $8

**DJ Ready** Kingman's Lucky Lounge. 5 p.m. free

**King of Kings Culture Sundays** spinning reggae, dancehall, and Hears rock with Imugan DJ Smoky. The New Parish. 10 p.m. $10 free for ladies before 11 p.m.

**Uncle Fizz's Ska Sundays** DJs spin ska, rocksteady, & roots reggae. The Hotty Toddy Club. 7 p.m. free

### MONDAY 24

**Dancehall Sighs** w/ DJs Sang and Luke Brown spinning world, reggae, Latin and hip-hop. Somar Bar & Lounge. 10 p.m. free

**Habana Mondays** The Layover. 6 p.m. free

**Three-Day Sessions** DJ eclectic Ismar spins local favorites. Luka's Taproom & Lounge. 6 p.m. free

**Underground Lounge** Joyette '90s & [illegible] 27s arcade. Radio. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. free

### TUESDAY 25

**Country Hears Night** plus line dancing. Club 1220. 8 p.m. free

**DJ Down Down Honey** spinning rock, indie punk, new wave, & more. The Missouri Lounge. 10 p.m. free

**DJ Windy** spinning punk. Lost Weekend Lounge. 9 p.m.-2 a.m. free

**Funky Limousine** w/ DJ Selecta BC spinning funk, reggae, dubstep, dancehall, bass beat, dirty south, grime, '90s hip-hop, Bassa and dub. The Layover. 10 p.m. free

**Low Down Cool Down** Somar Bar & Lounge. 9 p.m. $7ish

**Soul Flyer** DJ Juan G and rotating guests spinning reggae, dancehall, and African rhythms. Luka's Taproom & Lounge. 9 p.m. free

### WEDNESDAY 26

**Hard Candy** w/ DJs Sazz and Bad Mouth spinning electro and a prize for girls who lose gold. White Horse Inn. 9 p.m. $5-$7

**The Jet Stre** w/ DJ Bantern and special guests. Luka's Taproom & Lounge. 9 p.m. free

**The Jump Off: Hump Day Hip-Hop** w/ DJs spinning hip-hop. Club 21. 9 p.m. $6-$15

**Knuckle Sandwich** w/ DJ Fee Bug. The Layover. 9 p.m. free

**Roots** resident DJs Sou Perlina and Lyrac and special guests spin hip-hop, deep house, broken beat, uptempo dancehall, reggae, and Brazilian rhythms. Somar Bar & Lounge. 9 p.m. free

**Productions** DJ [illegible] Timmy spins everything from disco to punk rock from the '50s through the '90s. Hermann's Saloon. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. free

**Underground Soul Sessions** spinning deep house, afro-latin, hip-hop, and R&B. Era Art Bar and Lounge. 9 p.m. $5 before 10, $10 after

## PICK

### 121 Minutes

S[illegible] (aka [illegible] Dexter Greenwood) may appear on the surface to be yet another beatmaker with yet another silly name (simply pronounced "[illegible]"), but don't dismiss him so easily. His 2012 EP *Our Love Is Hurting Us*, is great, but his music becomes especially realized during his live sets, when he syncs tracks to visual projections. During an opening set for Grimes, he displayed cinematic portraits in the style of French New Wave films while he fiddled with a drum machine, sang haunting vocals that he looped, and wildly danced onstage. oOoOO should set the proper ambience tone for 120 Minutes: End of the World Party at the Elbo Room (647 Valencia St., San Francisco) on Friday, Dec. 21, where he'll open for LA production duo Nguzunguzu, along with Boychild and resident DJs SANA, MUSETE and Chauncey CC. Nguzunguzu, whose style cobbles together global bass, mainstream hip-hop, and pop, is most known as the brains behind M.I.A.'s comeback mixtape *Vicki Leekx*. 10 p.m., $8, $10. *Elbo.com* — *Whitney Phaneuf*

SAVAGE LOVE

# GOT TO GET OFF

Destructive behavior in pursuit of a turn-on

By Dan Savage

*I am a seventeen-year-old girl growing up in an adoptive family in Australia. I was sexually abused by my birth family, and I think it really fucked up my sexuality. The only thing that gets me off is the idea of people absolutely destroying their lives for an orgasm. I started with mild S&M stories and then moved on to grosser stuff like murder (stories and online images), pedo (stories only), and lately I've been thinking about my (adoptive) parents. The thing is, it doesn't have to be a particular category. As long as it's the most vile thing I can think of, it will get me off. There isn't a pattern as far as gender, age, or relationship to the people I am fantasizing about—it just has to be horrible, the kind of thing that would destroy you in real life. These fantasies alone are scary enough, but because they are literally the only things that get me off, I can't even really tell if I'm attracted to boys or girls, or none of the above. I'm scared to talk to a counselor about this because I don't want to freak my parents out. I mean, I've got my quirks, but overall I seem like a pretty healthy kid and I try not to worry them. I don't expect you to solve this problem via your column, but do you have any ideas for how I could get help with this without messing up my family?*

*Not Over Painful Experiences*

Sane people can have extreme and/or violent sexual fantasies, and extreme and/or violent sexual fantasies do not make sane people crazy. (Let's call them EVSFs for short, shall we?)

But you need to talk to a shrink — not because you're hopelessly damaged or the only person out there with EVSFs, but because you're troubled by your fantasies. And that's understandable. It's difficult to have EVSFs — or to find a healthy way to incorporate EVSFs into your sex life, or to figure out how to deal EVSFs way the fuck back if there's no healthy way to incorporate them into your sex life — when your erotic imagination is constantly dragging you to new and more disturbing places. And while most people's fantasies are relatively fixed, i.e., certain types of people or scenarios turn them on, your erotic imagination seems to be on the hunt for new "wrong" thoughts, images, stimuli, and scenarios. You need to seize control of your sexuality, and you'll need help doing that, or your sense of estrangement from your sexuality will only continue to grow.

That said, you could be seeing causation where there is only coincidence. There are a lot of people out there who didn't suffer the kind of abuse you did — or any kind of abuse at all — but who nevertheless have EVSFs. Some people with troubling fantasies or interests have found relief with low-dose antidepressants, some folks with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have been helped by novel programs that incorporate MDMA, aka ecstasy, into their treatment plans. You could be suffering from PTSD, considering your history.

A good therapist may be able to help you reshape and redirect your fantasies in the direction of still intense, less-wrong, not-constantly-escalating stimuli that gives you the "wrongness" charge you need without risking your mental health or your life. (Stay away from all pedo porn sites, even "stories only" ones. Please.) And a good sex therapist can help you draw a clear distinction between your adult sexuality and your history of sexual abuse.

Considering the abuse you suffered at the hands of your family of origin, I trust that your adoptive parents are aware that you may need professional help throughout your life and that your asking for help is a good sign about (1) you as a person and (2) them as parents. At your very first appointment, ask your shrink to confirm that your sessions are confidential. If for some reason your shrink tells you he or she can't offer you complete confidentiality (which they can and, in most places, are required to do by law, unless you're a danger to yourself or others), thank the nice shrink for his or her time and ask your parents to make you an appointment to see a different shrink.

Please get help — not because you are or may be kinky, but because you're struggling with doubt, you're confused about your sexual orientation, and you're rightly worried about the way your erotic imagination keeps upping the "wrongness" ante. And remember: Not all counselors or shrinks are created equal. If you don't like or click with the first one you see, tell your parents you want to see someone else.

*I am gay and I have a brother who's gay. The problem is, he is very much into humiliation. He exposes himself online and allows his online "masters" to have control over his pictures and videos. I found his pictures recently, and the embarrassment and humiliation were a huge turn-on for him. (In real life, we've never shown any interest sexually in each other whatsoever. But when he asked if I had any naked pictures, I told him I did and sent some to him, and somehow that was a bit of a turn-on, I must admit.) On to the real problem. Soon, my brother told me that he felt really guilty, cleaned up his hard drive, deleted all his pics and mine, and asked me to do the same, and swore off playing online. But I found evidence that he's resumed this habit. This has been a pattern for him, he says, and he insists he was somehow damaged in childhood. I told him I see him as my kinky brother and that he might be happier if he could just accept himself. But I don't think he should quit his "addiction" cold turkey, as it hasn't worked in the past.*

*Bro Of Kinky Bro*

There are people who manage to turn their lives upside down in pursuit of their turn-ons — there are people whose sex lives are complete fucking shitshows — and all they're into is heterosexual sex in the missionary position in their own bedrooms with the lights off. Your brother's problem isn't his childhood or his kink. His problems are his self-loathing, his attempts to swear off his kink (which leads to binge-and-purge cycles), and the reckless ways he indulges his kink when he's bingeing.

Instead of running from his kinks — which he can't do — your brother needs to find safer, saner ways to satisfy his desire for erotic humiliation and submitting to someone else's control. People with humiliation kinks managed to find ways to get off before the internet came along, and so can your brother. ●

*Find the Savage Lovecast (my weekly podcast) every Tuesday at TheStranger.com/savage*
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NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE Trustee Sale No. 442770CA Loan No. 0700945514 Title Order No. 433583 YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 01-12-2006. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On 01-10-2013 at 9:00 AM, CALIFORNIA RECONVEYANCE COMPANY as the duly appointed Trustee under and pursuant to Deed of Trust Recorded 01-31-2006, Book , Page , Instrument 2006031[illegible] of official records in the Office of the Recorder of ALAMEDA County, California, executed by: HEPCHING CHRISTY CHEUNG, A SINGLE WOMAN, as Trustor, WASHINGTON MUTUAL BANK, FA, as Beneficiary, will sell at public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash, cashier's check drawn by a state or national bank, a cashier's check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a cashier's check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association, or savings bank specified in section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state. Sale will be held by the duly appointed trustee as shown below, of all right, title, and interest conveyed to and now held by the trustee in the hereinafter described property under and pursuant to the Deed of Trust. The sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by the Deed of Trust, interest thereon, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee for the total amount (at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale) reasonably estimated to be set forth below. The amount may be greater on the day of sale. Place of Sale: Scottish Rite Center, 1547 Lakeside Dr., Oakland, CA 94612 Legal Description: LOT 10, COLLINS RESUBDIVISION OF A PORTION OF BLOCK 3, OF SUBDIVISION OF A PORTION OF LOT 6, ALSO, A PORTION OF THE COGSHALL TRACT, FILED NOVEMBER 30, 1906, MAP BOOK 22, PAGE 5, ALAMEDA COUNTY RECORDS. Amount of unpaid balance and other charges: $570,590.39 (estimated) Street address and other common designation of the real property: 4516 ESSEX STREET EMERYVILLE, CA 94608 APN Number: 049-1081-024-01 The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. The property heretofore described is being sold "as is". In compliance with California Civil Code 2923.5(c) the mortgagee, trustee, beneficiary, or authorized agent declares that it has contacted the borrower(s) to assess their financial situation and to explore options to avoid foreclosure; or that it has made efforts to contact the borrower(s) to assess their financial situation and to explore options to avoid foreclosure by one of the following methods: by telephone; by United States mail; either 1st class or certified; by overnight delivery; by personal delivery; by e-mail; by face to face meeting. DATE: 12-12-2012 CALIFORNIA RECONVEYANCE COMPANY, as Trustee REGINA CANTRELL, ASSISTANT SECRETARY CALIFORNIA RECONVEYANCE COMPANY IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. California Reconveyance Company 9200 Oakdale Avenue Mail Stop: CA2-4379 Chatsworth, CA 91311 800-892-6902 For Sales Information: www.lpsasap.com or 1-714-730-2727 www.priorityposting.com or 1-714-573-1965 www.auction.com or 1-800-280-2832 NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS: If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a trustee auction does not automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction, you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off, before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder's office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same lender may hold more than one mortgage or deed of trust on the property. NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER: The sale date shown on this notice of sale may be postponed one or more times by the mortgagee, beneficiary, trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about trustee sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, this information can be obtained from one of the following three companies: LPS Agency Sales and Posting at (714) 730-2727 or visit the Internet Web site www.lpsasap.com (Registration required to search for sale information) or Priority Posting and Publishing at (714) 573-1965 or visit the Internet Web site www.priorityposting.com (Click on the link for "Advanced Search" to search for sale information), or auction.com at 1-800-280-2832 or visit the Internet Web site www.auction.com, using the Trustee Sale No. shown above. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the Internet Web site. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale. A-434[illegible] 12/19/2012, 12/26/2012, 01/02/2013

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NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE Trustee Sale No. : 20110015004023 Title Order No.: 110432661 FHA/VA/PMI No.: YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST, DATED [illegible]/11/2007. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. NDEX WEST, LLC, as duly appointed Trustee under and pursuant to Deed of Trust Recorded on 08/[illegible]/2007 as Instrument No. 2007[illegible] of official records in the office of the County Recorder of ALAMEDA County, State of CALIFORNIA. EXECUTED BY: ZENA R LONG, WILL SELL AT PUBLIC AUCTION TO HIGHEST BIDDER FOR CASH, CASHIER'S CHECK/CASH EQUIVALENT or other form of payment authorized by 2924h(b), (payable at time of sale in lawful money of the United States). DATE OF SALE: 01/08/2013 TIME OF SALE: 12:[illegible] PM PLACE OF SALE: AT THE FALLON STREET ENTRANCE TO THE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 1225 FALLON STREET, OAKLAND, CA. STREET ADDRESS and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 871 55TH ST, EMERYVILLE, CALIFORNIA 94608 APN#: 014-1156-031 The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. Said sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by said Deed of Trust, with interest thereon, as provided in said note(s), advances, under the terms of said Deed of Trust, fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust. The total amount of the unpaid balance of the obligation secured by the property to be sold and reasonable estimated costs, expenses and advances at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale is $456,303.74. The beneficiary under said Deed of Trust heretofore executed and delivered to the undersigned a written Declaration of Default and Demand for Sale, and a written Notice of Default and Election to Sell. The undersigned caused said Notice of Default and Election to Sell to be recorded in the county where the real property is located. NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS: If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a trustee auction does not automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction, you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off, before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder's office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same lender may hold more than one mortgage or deed of trust on the property. NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER: The sale date shown on this notice of sale may be postponed one or more times by the mortgagee, beneficiary, trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about trustee sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, you may call 714-730-2727 for information regarding the trustee's sale or visit this Internet Web site www.lpsasap.com for information regarding the sale of this property, using the file number assigned to this case 20110015004023. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the Internet Web site. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale. FOR TRUSTEE SALE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL: AGENCY SALES and POSTING 3210 EL CAMINO REAL, SUITE 200 IRVINE, CA 92602 714-730-2727 www.lpsasap.com NDEx West, L.L.C. MAY BE ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. NDEx West, L.L.C. as Trustee Dated: 12/05/2012 A-4337232 12/12/2012, 12/19/2012, 12/26/2012

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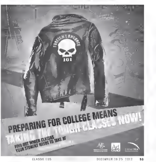
APN: 049-1529-256-03 TS No: CA05002611-12-1 TO No: 1260061 NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 8/9/2006. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On 1/10/2013 at 09:00 AM, 2nd Floor Lodge/Banquet Room at Scottish Rite Center, 1547 Lakeside Dr. Oakland, CA 94612, MTC FINANCIAL INC. dba TRUSTEE CORPS, as the duly Appointed Trustee, under and pursuant to the power of sale contained in that certain Deed of Trust Recorded on 08/22/2006 as Instrument No. 2006320097 of official records in the Office of the Recorder of Alameda County, California, executed by OK JIN PARK, AN UNMARRIED WOMAN AND JI YOUNG PARK, AN UNMARRIED WOMAN, AS JOINT TENANTS, as Trustor(s), in favor of AMERICA'S WHOLESALE LENDER as Lender and MORTGAGE ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION SYSTEMS, INC., as nominee for Lender, its successors and/or assigns as Beneficiary, WILL SELL AT PUBLIC AUCTION TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER, in lawful money of the United States, all payable at the time of sale, that certain property situated in said County, California describing the land therein as: As more fully described in said Deed of Trust The property heretofore described is being sold "as is". The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 2 COMMODORE DRIVE #[illegible] EMERYVILLE, CA 94608-1645 The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. Said sale will be made without covenant or warranty, express or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the Note(s) secured by said Deed of Trust, with interest thereon, as provided in said Note(s), advances if any, under the terms of the Deed of Trust, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust. The total amount of the unpaid balance of the obligations secured by the property to be sold and reasonable estimated costs, expenses and advances at the time of the initial publication of this Notice of Trustee's Sale is estimated to be $254,102.21 (Estimated), provided, however, prepayment premiums, accrued interest and advances will increase this figure prior to sale. Beneficiary's bid at said sale may include all or part of said amount. In addition to cash, the Trustee will accept a cashier's check drawn on a state or national bank, a check drawn by a state or federal credit union or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association or savings bank specified in Section 5102 of the California Financial Code and authorized to do business in California, or other such funds as may be acceptable to the trustee. In the event tender other than cash is accepted, the Trustee may withhold the issuance of the Trustee's Deed Upon Sale until funds become available to the payee or endorsee as a matter of right. The property offered for sale excludes all funds held on account by the property receiver, if applicable. If the Trustee is unable to convey title for any reason, the successful bidder's sole and exclusive remedy shall be the return of monies paid to the Trustee and the successful bidder shall have no further recourse. Notice to Potential Bidders If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a Trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a Trustee auction does not automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction, you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off, before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder's office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same Lender may hold more than one mortgage or Deed of Trust on the property. Notice to Property Owner The sale date shown on this Notice of Sale may be postponed one or more times by the Mortgagee, Beneficiary, Trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about Trustee Sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, you may call Auction.com at 800.280.2832 for information regarding the Trustee's Sale or visit the Internet Web site address on the previous page for information regarding the sale of this property, using the file number assigned to this case, CA05002611-12-1. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the Internet Web site. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale. DATE: 11/28/2012 TRUSTEE CORPS TS No. CA05002611-12-1 17100 Gillette Ave Irvine, CA 92614 949-252-8300 [illegible], Authorized Signatory SALE INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED ON LINE AT www.Auction.com AUTOMATED SALES INFORMATION PLEASE CALL AUCTION.COM AT 800.280.2832 TRUSTEE CORPS MAY BE ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED MAY BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. P1006[illegible] 12/12, 12/19, 12/26/2012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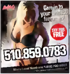
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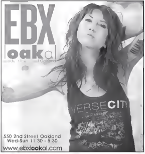

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